

**The Changing Face of Kabudu: An Examination of Community and
Community Relationships in Sierra Leone Since 1960, With Specific Reference
to the Rise of The Evangelical Christian Groups in Freetown.**

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the significance of community and community relationships in Sierra Leone, called *kabudu* in the Creole language. For many individuals the community relationship is viewed as a precious value, that creates the factor of belonging to, and having a place in. The community is devoid of meaning without the religious dimension. It is this dimension which is considered to be the active reality which lends life and vitality to the ordinary. In the process religion helps to shape and foster community solidarity and well-being. Since religion is linked closely to *kabudu* in traditional society in Sierra Leone, this thesis examines initially how *kabudu* has functioned in the traditional religious, economic and social spheres of Sierra Leonean society, primarily by examining the structures and institutions like village and family *kabudu*, created and maintained by individuals who live and interact together on a regular basis. The thesis moves on in chapter two to an examination of life cycle rituals: birth, puberty, marriage and death, to ascertain whether they are created institutions which help to foster *kabudu* cohesion and well-being. It then studies in chapter three, the effects of modernity, including missionary Christianity, Western education, urbanisation and migration, on the traditional ideals of *kabudu*. The chapter seeks to explore the interactive dynamism between the traditional ideal of *kabudu* and the factors of modernity, to determine the extent of retention and shift occurring in the traditional ideal of *kabudu*. The study follows this by outlining in detail in chapter four, how the political and economic crises in Sierra Leone since 1961 have affected traditional practices of *kabudu*.

In the light of the disruptions to the traditional sense of community noted earlier, the thesis asks if traditional expressions of *kabudu* have begun to be replaced by the contemporary evangelical Christian movement which have sprung up throughout Freetown. The remaining two chapters thus analyse selected evangelical Christian groups in Freetown as expressions of *kabudu* to determine whether their rise and expansion can be explained by the prevailing need for the traditional sense of *kabudu*, by its disruption due to persistent social disintegration since 1961 and by the emphasis of such evangelical groups on social cohesion and community.

ABBREVIATIONS

APC - All People's Congress Party
AWM - American Wesleyan Mission
CCSL - Christian Council of Sierra Leone
CFAN - Christ For All Nations
CIA - Christians in Action
CLC - Christian Literature Crusade Bookshop
CLESL - Christian Life Era Sierra Leone
CMS - Church Missionary Society
EFSL - Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone
EUB - Evangelical United Brethren
FBC - Fourah Bay College
ISU - Internal Security Unit
JLM - Jesus is Lord Ministries
MCA - The Missionary Association in Africa
NPRC - National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC - National Reformation Council
OAU - Organisation of African Unity
PFSL - Prison Fellowship Sierra Leone
REAPS - Rapid Engagement in the Acquisition of Practical Skills
RUF - Revolutionary United Front
SLAW - Sierra Leone Association on Women's Welfare
SLBC - Sierra Leone Bible College
SLBS - Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service
SLPP - Sierra Leone People's Party
SU - Scripture Union of Sierra Leone
UBC - United Brethren in Christ
YWCA - Young Women's Christian Association

To the memory of Benji, and to Josephine and Ida, my parents
You belong, therefore, I belong.

and to

Hazel and Ronnie - True Friends.

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own research, and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university. I have acknowledged other people's contributions in my endnotes and sources. **Signed:**

Introduction

1. *The Study*

This study is about the fundamental nature of *kabudu*, that is, community and community relationships in Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone the majority of people ideally live and experience *kabudu* every day. The community and community relationships, therefore, become a vital factor of life. An individual is not a separate entity but a facet of the community. Harry Sawyerr rightly points out that:

However powerful or, for that matter insignificant an African may be, he lives first, as a member of a community and next, as an individual. His family, his clan or tribe comes first himself as an individual, second. His activities may be personal but hardly individual. His whole life is always geared to the well-being of the community.¹

The *kabudu* relationship is highly esteemed as indispensable for binding people and families together. It expresses the yearnings for deep fellowship with other individuals, and provides the sense of belonging and feeling of identity with others. The structure emphasises corporateness as against individualism. One's personal identity is established and shaped in terms of the *kabudu*, as John Mbiti notes: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'.² Members are encouraged to develop attitudes of respect for age and human life, trust in oneself, in the group, and in the society, a sense of freedom and responsibility.

Religion has maintained a persistent role in the lives of the majority of Sierra Leoneans. It is an everyday, living and organic reality, that exerts a significant influence upon the thinking and living of the people.³ The *kabudu* and *kabudu* relationship is therefore incomplete without the religious aspect. Sawyerr notes; 'The African sees himself as part of a cultic community. A community which is incomplete without the supernatural world'.⁴ Mbiti notes; 'Africans are notoriously religious....Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it'.⁵ In Sierra Leone the religious aspect of *kabudu* is very important. It is what helps to shape social values, fostering *kabudu* solidarity and well-being. Religion thus becomes a means of informing society, of making it better, thereby preventing some of society's shortcomings and excesses. The individual then is considered to be a link in a chain of life, which consists of the whole society: a chain preserved by the religious rites and observances of the *kabudu*.⁶ The three religions that

form part and parcel of the social groups in Sierra Leone are Christianity, Islam, and the Traditional religion.

2. *The Problem*

An examination of the above description of *kabudu* implies that the ideal *kabudu* is one characterised by a high degree of affinity and interaction among its members. There is common bonding among members which manifests itself in the recognition of *kabudu* norms, values, aspirations, and goals. There is an awareness of the corporate dimension of life, and conscious effort is made by members to achieve this corporateness. Individuals interact with each other, and the greater part of their spiritual, physical and material needs are met within this framework.

Community and community relationships are not static but dynamic. The dynamism involves the *kabudu* maintaining aspects of its own distinctive character, while at the same time adopting and adapting elements foreign to it. These elements are mostly derived through contact with the factors related to modernity. The implication of this contact is that the *kabudu* concept undergoes expansion and modification, with the consequence of a degree of disruption taking place. With an increase in the scale of interaction between the ideal *kabudu* and the wider society, new values and norms of behaviour have been introduced. Individual activities have become more widespread and diffuse, thus weakening the coherence of the ideal *kabudu*. New values are either replacing completely or co-exist alongside the traditional ones. This effectively shifts the basis from the ideal *kabudu* to a generally and more widely derived criterion.⁷ Despite this shift the prevailing need for *kabudu* still persists. The point therefore is to examine the three factors of: 'How fundamental is the abiding sense of the need for *kabudu* in Sierra Leone?'. 'To what extent is there a maintenance and shift occurring in the traditional ideal of *kabudu* in Sierra Leone?'. 'Where does the evangelical movement fit in the picture?'. This thesis will aim at examining the above three factors.

3. *Reasons for the Study*

As already noted, in Sierra Leone, like most other African societies, the community and community relationships are of vital importance. Yet not much has been documented on

such a significant aspect in the country, especially with regards to its changing nature.⁸ This study aims at documenting aspects of this significant factor, with a view to filling a void created by the lack of documentation on this topic. The purpose of this study, therefore, is an examination of how fundamental *kabudu* is for the country. I will seek to explore the fundamental nature of *kabudu* which is still maintained even when threatened by external factors. At most the *kabudu* is widened and modified in its contact with the external factors. I will address questions such as: Is the traditional ideal of *kabudu* a fundamental outcome of traditional practices in the country? What do rites of passage contribute to the traditional concept of *kabudu*? In what ways might the forces of modernity possibly have affected the traditional views of *kabudu*? Is it a feasible assumption that the growth of the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone can be explained by the fact that it is fulfilling the prevailing need for *kabudu* in the country, particularly in the light of the political disruptions? The thesis will explore three phases of the *kabudu* concept, beginning with the traditional concept of *kabudu*, moving on to the factors of modernity, including the political situation, then moving on to the evangelical Christian movement as the final phase to be examined.

For the traditional phase I have selected the Limba people in the North of Sierra Leone, as a case study, which will exemplify the other ethnic groups in the country. My choice of the Limba has been due to three main factors: firstly, they are perhaps the oldest ethnic group in Sierra Leone. In the hills of Wara Wara in Northern Sierra Leone, there have been some recent discoveries by an archaeologist John Atherton, of stone tools and other artefacts dating back to the 8th Century. There is every indication that they were left there by the Limba.⁹ Secondly, the Limbas are the third largest ethnic group, next to the Mendes on whom a lot has been documented, and the Temnes who tend to be highly Islamised. Thirdly, the Limba are more traditional than any other ethnic group in the country.¹⁰

The rest of the thesis is drawn from Freetown, which is the ethnically diverse capital of Sierra Leone. Freetown is significant because it represents a response to what is going on in the rest of the country.

4. Hypotheses to be tested

The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

1. *Kabudu* defines an essential part of the fabric of the Sierra Leone society.

2. *Kabudu* has undergone modifications and extensions due to the forces of modernity and the political situation in the country.
3. The evangelical Christian movement is fulfilling the prevailing need for *kabudu* in the light of the changes taking place in the country.

5. *The term Kabudu*

The term *kabudu* is derived from the old English word Caboodle. It is used as a slang in the expression 'The whole Caboodle', referring to a number of persons or things viewed as a whole, a set, or collection; for example, 'She had more soul than the whole Caboodle of them put together'.¹¹ The English Caboodle becomes *Kabudu* in the Creole language. The Creole language is significant in Sierra Leone as not only the mother tongue language of the Krios in the Western Area, but also as the *lingua franca* of the country. *Kabudu* takes on an added dimension as defining a 'coterie of friends', that is a close group of people with a unifying common interest or purpose.¹²

The term *kabudu* is mostly used when referring to members of a friendship group or social club. A very good example of this usage is the hunting society in the capital of Freetown. The Krios established the hunting society as a means of restoring their identity and sense of solidarity. This was necessary as the Krios consisted of two categories of persons, who had been brought together by circumstances not of their own making. One category of Krios consisted of freed slaves, shipped to Freetown as settlers from the West. The other category comprised recaptive slaves, captured on board slave ships meant for the new world, and set free in Freetown. Both the settlers and the captives were from different parts of Africa. The indigenous inhabitants of Sierra Leone were very hostile to the Krios. They were not regarded by the former as genuine sons of the soil, but were despised as slave descendants. The British colonial administration also did not consider the Krios to be indigenous. In official documents the Krios were referred to by the British as non-natives. It became essential therefore for the Krios to acquire a common culture and feeling of solidarity in opposition to the Europeans and the local inhabitants.¹³

The hunting society originated with the Yoruba group of settlers. Towards the end of the 1920s most captives came from Southwest Nigeria in an area occupied by the Yoruba, known as Yorubaland. They thus became the most numerous group of settlers. The other

African settlers belonged to over 300 different tribes from other parts of West African as far south as the Congo estuary. Since the settlers belonged to such a variety of ethnic groups, it was impossible for them to keep their own particular culture. The dominant Yoruba culture was therefore incorporated.¹⁴ The hunting society with its origins in Yorubaland, became a very significant factor in filling the vacuum created by the upheaval of moving from one culture to another. Nowadays the society has become very broad based in its membership composition. Even though the Krios, and Christianity, still dominate, the society now has members from all the various ethnic groups, and religious affiliations. The society members are also not confined to just one class of people. Membership is representative of the wider community: literate and illiterate, rich and poor, young and old. This has the social benefit of people intermingling with others from different origins and backgrounds on a friendly and socially acceptable basis.

Most recaptives settled in the mountain villages, where bush land was in abundance. One aim of the founders was to instruct men living in these areas about the forests, that is teaching and equipping them with the skills necessary to hunt game successfully, teaching them to learn the various sounds of the forests, and instructing them about the various herbs and their medicinal values. The success in these aims could be seen in the fact that some of the society members are reputed as being renowned herbalists. Some get to know the bush so well that in crisis situations they are relied upon, and their assistance is considered vital to the resolution of the crisis. For instance, during the rebel war, when it was feared that rebels were hiding in the bushes of Freetown, their assistance was vital in tracking them down. The hunters were the ones who organised themselves into search parties combing the bush. Also they track down wild animals attacking villages to destroy them.¹⁵

The hunting society is well organised. It can be classified as a secret society, in the sense that its initiation rituals, as well as some other aspects of the society, are known only to members who take an oath not to divulge its secrets to non-members. Even though there are hundreds of hunting groups found all over the Western area of the country, the structure of all these groups is basically the same. To ensure uniformity and continuity there is the Hunting Almagamation. The Hunting Almagamation embraces all hunting societies in the particular area. The various groups in a particular area send two representatives to the almagamation council. They serve for a period of three to five years. They help in the decision-making process that affects not just their own group but all the groups in the area.

There is a hierarchical structure intended to preserve and strengthen the established societal order: *Ogun* the Yoruba divinity of iron is at the top in the hierarchical structure.¹⁶ *Ogun* is represented by a piece of iron, granite stone, and the skull of an animal.¹⁷ He is considered to be the custodian of the societal norms and values. He is the guardian of truth and peace, to whom all warring factions within the group must appeal. In times of crisis or quarrel the opponents have to accompany the *Ashikpa* (head of the elders) for a peaceful resolution. The shrine is usually a round roofless structure situated in the *Ashikpa*'s house. At the shrine the *Ashikpa* mediates. The opponents are required to be truthful in all they say. It is believed that those who tell lies are punished by *Ogun*, either with blindness or madness. The *Ogun* shrine is also visited on occasions such as before a hunting expedition, when hunters inquire about the expedition and ask for his blessing, before the establishment of a new local group, at the initiation of new members and after every successful hunt, when he must be thanked.¹⁸

The structure of the society ensures that the elders have a status they might never have acquired in the wider community. There is the *Ajadé*. He is usually the oldest hunter of the society, higher in rank than the *Ashikpa*. Usually he is the retired founder of the group, who has most likely been succeeded by his son, if the latter is a member of the society.

At the head of the elders is the very important figure of the *Ashikpa*. The *Ashikpa* is the head of the particular group. He is usually an old experienced hunter. He acts as judge, general overseer and mediator between members of the group and *Ogun*. The *Ashikpa* is not only the head of the group, but is also renowned as a herbalist. As herbalist he is considered to be very powerful. He utilises the innate powers of plants and animals in binding together members of the group. His power is not to be abused but to be used to heal, strengthen, and protect. When used in this way it benefits and enhances the well-being of the individuals within the group. This is further reflected in the well-being and harmony of the society on the whole. Abuse of this power on the other hand upsets the balance and well-being of the individuals within the group, and the group itself.

The *Ashikpa* is assisted by the *Omo Ashikpa*, who is the vice president of the group. He is also an old and experienced hunter. The *Baba-Ode* is also important as the head of the Hunting Almagamation. He is assisted by the secretary and treasurer of the Almagamation. All three officials are appointed by all elected representatives to the Almagamation by the various groups.

The other council members include the *Akowi*, the secretary of the group. He records the minutes at meetings, does the role call, and collects the subscriptions. There is also the *Baba*, the field marshall responsible for all activities on a hunting expedition. The *Olukutu*, who is responsible for all activities of the masked figure, including the figure's costume and dance. The *Oni-Sawe* is in charge of the *sawe* (medicine) for the masked figure.

The female members occupy a lower position in the society. They do not go through the same process of initiation as the men. They do not accompany the men on hunting expeditions, nor are they informed of what happens in the bush. They cook for the men, and form the bulk of onlookers and singers during the public performances of the society. On the whole the stability and cohesion of the society is enhanced through obedience to the hierarchy.¹⁹

The society elders act as the social and moral guardians of the laws and norms conducive to the maintenance of the society's well-being. There are rules against divulging the secrets of the society to non-members. There are regulations against lateness, non-attendance and irregular attendance at meetings. There are also rules governing correct behaviour. Also matters affecting members considered to be internal must first be brought for disciplinary hearing to the elders rather than the court of law. For instance, a member involved in improper behaviour would be cautioned by another using the pass-word known only to members of the society. In the case of non-compliance the individual must be brought before the council of elders for disciplinary measures or even expulsion. The pass-word is an important tool that enables members of different hunting groups to participate in the activities of other groups. Once it is used the individuals are recognised as 'brothers'. There are also other important emblems and symbols used by the society, such as the *Afaray*, a small wind instrument. Members understand the various sounds. Depending on the sound being made members know it is a summons to a meeting, or that a member has died, or something else has happened. When they hear the *Afaray* sound, members are obliged to leave whatever they are doing to find out more details from the announcer. The *bileh* (gun), and the *aboja* (cutlass), are carried by the elders, and used in hunting expeditions. They are considered to be the weapons and visible link with Ogun, representing his power.²⁰

The masked figure known as *Eri* is also a symbolic representation of the dead hunters. The head is that of a deer, the main animal hunted for its meat. The dress is decorated with cowrie shells and palm leaves. He carries an axe made of very strong steel, with a wooden handle. The handle is also covered with cowrie shells. This is significant as the cowrie shell is a symbol of potency and power. The *Eri* carries a hamper on his back, which also contains (among other things) cowrie shells. The hamper is believed to be packed full with power emanating from the deceased old hunters. This power is believed to be so potent it needs to be cooled whenever the *Eri* performs in public. This is done by the *Oni-Sawe*, who dips a small broom into a calabash of herbs and sprinkles it often on the *Eri*. If this cooling process is not carried out, it is believed that the dangerous elements emanating from the *Eri* would cause misfortune to all those present at the performance. In the same vein if a pregnant woman encounters an *Eri*, a palm frond must be taken from the *Eri*, dipped into the calabash of herbs and tied around her wrist. Otherwise she would give birth to a monster.²¹

Membership fees are paid annually, and subscriptions are paid monthly. The money collected is used not only for the maintenance of the society, but also to help members with funeral and wedding expenses, or whenever the situation demands. Members are expected to regard each other as brothers and to be interested in each other's well-being. The very wealthy members are also encouraged to contribute extra cash when the situation demands to help the less fortunate. This has the effect of making the rich other-centred and less self-centred, as they come to view their wealth and privilege as something to be shared with the less fortunate. It boosts the self esteem of the less fortunate, giving them the satisfaction of knowing they belong to a loving and caring community.

There is a very important ritual performed for the dead who are also part of the caring community. On the eve of the fortieth day ceremony for a deceased member, the elders of the particular hunting group concerned retire to the forest. They stay in the forest until the morning or afternoon of the ceremony. In the bush they perform secret rituals. The rituals, they say, open the door for the deceased to be accepted in the ancestral world. The confirmation of this acceptance is determined by whether they catch some game or not, so they stay on until they catch some game to take back. The grave of the deceased is visited, and the deceased spirit is invoked in some secret rituals. Initiation of new members also involves a visit to the cemetery. This takes place at midnight, by the grave side of the oldest

deceased member of the group. The *ashikpa* invokes his spirit, and secret rituals are performed.²²

To help in maintaining the harmony and solidarity in this type of club, meetings are also held whenever there is a dispute between members of a particular group, or between different groups. During such meetings the elders preside. Sometimes also two or more groups in a particular area would come together to perform at *aradé* (celebration). This usually involves the beating of drums, dancing, clapping and singing, at a wedding or some other social function. During such occasions the masked figure *Eri*, representing the founding fathers of the society, performs. Mostly this performance, with the exception of when it retires into the *baya* (secluded area), is open to the general public. Sometimes during the public performances more members are recruited into the society as some people become attracted to the songs and dances, as well as the whole atmosphere of solidarity.

In this study I am expanding the definition of *kabudu* (there are equivalent terms in the other languages) to refer to community and community relationships in a wider sense in Sierra Leone. This term is suitable for my purpose because, as exemplified by the above description of the hunting club, *kabudu* implies a sense of belongingness. There is the yearning and fulfilment of the need to belong and attain fellowship with other individuals. There are created structures which help to maintain the established *kabudu*. The religious dimension is also considered of vital importance for the establishment and maintenance of the *kabudu's* well-being.

Kabudu in this work, therefore, helps to explain a sense of communal well-being and solidarity. It refers to the coming together of individuals at the family, religious, political, local or national levels.²³ This coming together creates a *kabudu*, with members having a deep feeling of oneness and solidarity. The common identity is sometimes derived from ethnicity and social status, but most times without reference to these factors. The particular binding factor/s is considered of immense value, and it is that which holds the *kabudu* together. For example, as in the case of the hunting club mentioned above, *Ogun* is the binding factor that holds the members together without reference to ethnicity and social status.

6. *The Evangelicals*

The evangelical movement has developed in Sierra Leone not as an alternative response to Christianity, but as an alternative mode of spirituality within Christianity. It is part of a world-wide movement, that cuts across denominational allegiance. It influences members of the existing churches, and is also creating new ones. The movement assigns inerrancy to the Bible, and supremacy to Jesus as saviour of the world. The growth of the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone seems to have come about largely as a protest against a system in which the functions of religion as the moulder of social norms and values have become ineffective. It is a creative Christian response in the Sierra Leonean community, that deals with not just theological concerns, but extends into the social and political spheres.

7. *Thesis Structure*

There are six chapters in the thesis, excluding the introduction and conclusion.

Chapter one deals with the question of whether the ideal of *kabudu* is a fundamental outcome of traditional practices in Sierra Leone. To derive answers, I will explore the fundamental nature of *kabudu* by an examination of various aspects of traditional life, with reference to the structures and institutions formed by the individuals who live together at family and village/town levels. The individuals share a common area for a large number of their activities. In this local environment they have their residency, they achieve sustenance, and function to meet the common needs generated in this common space. An attempt will be made in establishing how *kabudu* is created, and its cohesion and well-being fostered, by looking at the common interaction and bonding among the individuals. This interaction is manifested in the creation and maintenance of common norms, values, goals and aspirations.

While chapter one deals with the more general aspects of the traditional *kabudu*, chapter two continues the discussion by a detailed examination of a created institution in the form of the rites of passage. This chapter will seek to deal with the question of the contribution, if any, of the rites of passage to the traditional ideal of *kabudu*. The likelihood of the rites of passage as one significant way in which the continuity and values of *kabudu* are instilled and maintained will be discussed.

The factors described in chapters one and two are representative of the traditional ideal of *kabudu*, which maintains certain aspects, while modifying and extending other aspects in its contact with the forces of modernity. Chapter three, therefore, deals with the process of modernity as a factor responsible for this modification and expansion of the traditional ideal of *kabudu*. The chapter will examine factors like urbanisation and migration with its potential for greater mobility, which allows kinship and local ties to be altered. Also to be examined are some of the new situations that are constantly arising and the greater number of alternative patterns of behaviour. The reasonableness of the assumption that the encounter between the factors described in chapters one and two, and those of modernity, is leading to the maintenance of certain traditional features, while at the same time modifying and widening features, will be explored.

The factors of change described in chapter three are not unique to Sierra Leone; they are common to nearly all African societies. Chapter four moves one stage further by dealing with a situation that applies specifically to Sierra Leone, namely the politics of corruption experienced by the country over a period of twenty-four years. Since Independence in 1961 up to 1996, the country has gone through various phases, from multi party to military rule, from military rule to multi party, then to a one party state and back to military rule. During most of this period there has been a circle of corruption which resulted in the rebel war, and all the devastating consequences for society. The chapter will examine the notion that deviation from expected values and norms can be devastating on the well-being of the whole society. The chapter explores the politics of corruption as a structure instituted by the All People's Congress party, and how it failed to enhance the collective well-being of the individuals within the society, because of self goals and aspirations.

In the light of the findings of the preceding chapters, chapters five and six examine the rise of the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone, in part, as a response to the need for the preservation of *kabudu*. Chapter five is a description of the origins and teachings of five groups belonging to the evangelical movement under study.

Chapter six addresses questions such as if and how is the evangelical movement fulfilling an abiding sense of a need for *kabudu* among Sierra Leoneans, in the light of the changes in the society, particularly those due to the political upheaval described in chapter four. The answers will come from an examination of what the perceived needs and benefits of such a

movement for the society are. This will be done by a discussion of its relation to tradition and fulfilment of needs, such as economic and social, for participants, as well as the wider Sierra Leonean public.

The conclusion of the thesis will take the reader back to the original research questions, and demonstrate how the unfolding material throughout the thesis has addressed these questions. The conclusion will also make suggestions for further research.

8. *Methodology*

This work benefits from both primary sources in the form of field work and secondary sources in the form of written materials already produced that are relevant to the subject.

8.A *Techniques of data collection*

Techniques of data collection are largely based on the qualitative approach to data collection. The qualitative stance on data collection is that researchers interact with those they study, whether this interaction assumes the form of living with or observing informants over a prolonged period of time, or actual collaboration. In short, the researcher tries to minimise the distance between him or herself and those being researched. This is necessary as the only reality is that constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation.²⁴ My use of this stance included participatory observations, formal interviews and informal conversations. This was done over a prolonged period of time. My first visit to Kamabai and the surrounding villages in the North took place in December 1983. Subsequent visits were made in December 1986 and December 1987. On the evangelicals the observations and conversations occurred in Freetown, between July 1990 and February 1999. A lot more information was collected through participatory observations and informal conversation, than formal interviews.

Being a participant observer in some of the processes accorded me the privilege of having first-hand experience of the processes, and to observe unusual aspects, as well as topics that are uncomfortable to discuss. Informal conversations not only clarified things I did not understand, but also shed light on things I had not been privileged to observe. Informal conversations proved more useful to me than interviews because of the fear and suspicion of

reasons for the interview. People feel more relaxed and at home when not under the questioning situation, hence they provide more details than requested. Interviews were very useful when dealing with important people like the village head and elders, as well as evangelical leaders who had very loaded schedules. Formal questionnaires were not used because of the same reasons of fear and suspicion. In any case in a country with such a high percentage of illiteracy, individuals rely on the educated to fill in the questionnaires. Whenever this happens it involves transmitting the feelings and responses of the one individual by another. This necessitates modifications and transformations by the writer.

Informants in the provinces, particularly on the rites of passage, were selected in various ways:

1. Names of people provided by the chiefs.
2. Interviews of Elders in groups and individually.
3. The youths who offer the names of people generally regarded as authorities on the traditional beliefs and practices.
4. Women in their households.
5. Those who just happened to be around at the time the interview or conversation was taking place.

In Freetown informants included category five, as well as migrants from various ethnic groups living in the capital Freetown. Also church leaders and workers, as well as staff members in various offices related to the evangelical movement, were interviewed.²⁵

Some informants were interviewed in Creole which is the most widely known language in Sierra Leone. Some informants were interviewed through interpreters who spoke Creole, either because they had an imperfect grasp of the Creole language and so did not feel very comfortable using it, or because they do not understand the Creole language at all.

When dealing with oral interviews and participatory observations there are bound to be difficulties one has to grapple with: the value-laden nature of information, the lack of official records to confirm or refute certain claims, difficulty in translation, in finding the appropriate word for a concept, in interpreting the information collected without bias, and with sifting the information to obtain corroboration. Some informants may refuse to answer questions, either because they do not know the answer, or because of the Sierra Leonean belief to *tok af lef af* (‘talk half, leave half’), in other words do not say all you know. There

are certain things that should be left unsaid. So even certain things I observed as researcher are to be excluded from any writing. There are difficulties in understanding and interpreting the innermost thoughts and feelings, particularly of the elderly. There are some aspects of tradition considered to be esoteric and are not readily divulged by the elders, and other practitioners. Some informants supply erroneous details, simply because they think that is what you want to hear. Yet other informants do not like answering questions for fear of retribution either from the spirit world or from their authorities. This creates loopholes and affects the interpretation of data. To minimise and in some cases overcome these difficulties, where feasible, I became a participant observer. The fact that I am from an ethnic group which observes the rites of passage, and by participating in evangelical meetings, proved to be very useful. On other occasions I sought to verify whether the information received was true by asking three or four different informants about the same issues. On the whole it was always necessary to build a climate of confidence, thereby allaying fears and suspicions. Another difficulty had to do with the Sierra Leonean conception of time, 'blackman time'. Sometimes a person to be interviewed agreed to an appointment only to turn up several hours late. Appointments would be postponed or cancelled at short or no notice at all. Sometimes this resulted in wastage of time and resources.

The secondary sources are listed in my bibliography.

8.B *Techniques of data interpretation*

The multi-disciplinary approach has been used. The combination of approaches, including the qualitative interpretation, make for clarity and objectivity in analysing the significant processes, understanding and meanings individuals attach to their lives, experiences and structures of society.²⁶ The methods help in creating an awareness of one's own biases, values and assumptions, and the effects these were likely to have on the research.²⁷

A study based on community and community relationships can be very wide, as the two are continuing processes. I have, therefore, limited the study to certain aspects of community and community relationships, and within a specific time frame, covering the period between 1960 - 1996. 1960 was the period just before Sierra Leone became an Independent nation in April 1961, and 1996 saw the installation of a democratic government. In the study I have

chosen aspects like the village and family *kabudu*, as well as the rites of passage, because they are extensively subscribed to.

Qualitative research is interpretative. It therefore has limitations as the research findings can be subjected to other meanings using a different methodology.

¹ Sawyerr, H. 'Soteriology Viewed From The African Situation', in J. Parratt, (ed.) *The Practice of Presence: Shorter Writings of Harry Sawyerr*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996, p.117.

² Mbiti, J. *African Religions and Philosophy*, London; Ibadan; Nairobi: Heinemann, 1971, p.108.

³ Bolaji Idowu notes that religion in Africa is not dead but living and organic. See Idowu, B. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, London: SCM, 1973, p.12.

⁴ Sawyerr, H. 'What is African Theology?', in Parratt, J. (ed.) *The Practice of Presence*, p.85.

⁵ Mbiti, J. *African religions*, p.1.

⁶ Sawyerr, H. 'Religion and Communal Tribal Life', in J. Parratt, (ed.), *The Practice of Presence*, p.10.

⁷ Walls, A.F. 'Primal Religious Traditions In Today's World', in F. Whaling, (ed.), *Religion in Today's World*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987, p.266-267, notes that traditional societies are forced to look beyond local concerns to the total world events as they are being affected by the forces in the contemporary world.

⁸ Ruth Finnegan, did field work among the Limba on a general social and economic study, with particular reference to their migration patterns in 1960, see *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone*, London: HMStationary Office, 1965. A more recent work is by Robert Smith, *A Survey and Theological Analysis of The Spiritual and Pentecostal - Evangelical Churches in Freetown, Sierra Leone*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994.

⁹ Fyle, C.M. *Alimamy Suluku of Sierra Leone 1820 - 1906*, London: Evans Brothers Ltd, 1979, p4.

¹⁰ Their traditional outlook has led to them being considered not very intelligent by the other ethnic groups. One former president of the country Joseph Saidu Momoh, was referred to as *dandogo* - the Limba dunce. More on this later on in the study.

¹¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1972.

¹² Fyle, C.N. & E.D. Jones, *Krio/English Dictionary*, London & Freetown: OUP & SLUP, 1980.

¹³ Banton, M. *West African City: A Study of Tribal Life in Freetown*, London, Ibadan, Accra: Oxford University Press, 1960, p.6.

¹⁴ Kreutzinger, H. *The Eri Devils in Freetown Sierra Leone*, Druck: Ferdinand Berger & Sohne, 1966, p.11.

¹⁵ Interview with Balogun Oniel, a one time high ranking official of one hunting group, on 10 April 1997.

¹⁶ *Ogun* is considered by the Yoruba to be the owner of all iron and steel. According to the Yoruba *Ogun* was himself originally a hunter who paved the way for other divinities to come to earth. For this reason they crowned him 'chief among the divinities'. He is the divinity of war, hunting, and activities or objects connected with iron. See J. Mbiti, *African*

religions and philosophy, London: Heinemann, 1971, p.78, and E.B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion*, London: SCM, 1973, p.136.

¹⁷ I listened to a recorded testimony on 24 August 1987, of an interview with Banki Kamara, former owner of a hunting group.

¹⁸ Kreutzinger, H. *Eri Devils*, p.30-31.

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.35. Also interview with Balogun Oniel on 10 April 1997.

²⁰ Interview with Balogun Oniel, 10 April 1997.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*

²³ Community has been described as an omnibus term. It encompasses almost any form of social grouping, which contains the major social institutions. See Hillery, G.A. 'Villages, Cities and Total Institutions', *American Sociological Review*, 28, 1963, p. 779.

²⁴ Creswell, J.W. *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative*, Thousand Oaks; London; New Delhi: SAGE publication, 1994, pp6ff.

²⁵ Selection of informants in the provinces I owe to C.M. Fyle, '*Solimana and its neighbours*', Ph.D. thesis, presented to Northwestern University, USA, 1976.

²⁶ Creswell, J.W. *Research Design*, p.145.

²⁷ Cox, J.L. *Rational Ancestors*, Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998, p.4f for a summary of the stages in the phenomenological method.

Chapter One

The Traditional Concept of *Kabudu* in Sierra Leone

1.A *The fundamental nature of Kabudu*

This chapter aims at exploring the fundamental nature of *kabudu* by an examination of the structures and institutions formed by individuals who live together at family and village levels. Issues to be dealt with include how the traditional ideal of *kabudu* is created and maintained through common interaction and bonding among individuals seeking to maintain common norms and values. It must be noted that tradition in this sense does not imply obsolete. It refers to a common relationship organised around individuals with a common system of beliefs and norms. There is similarity in what individuals do and believe, and religion forms a vital part of their system.¹ The subscribed religion does not necessarily mean the traditional religion *per se*, but the beliefs, values and norms that were either instituted by it, or that it has helped in shaping. The evolving thoughts, beliefs, norms and values of the traditional system are handed down with modifications from one generation to the next. Many of the values and practices of the earlier traditional system are still operational, and the new is interpreted and operated within the framework of the old.²

1.B *A brief geographical and historical introduction to Sierra Leone*

Sierra Leone is a small country situated in the bulge of West Africa. It forms part of the Upper Guinea Coast, stretching from Cape Verde to Cape Mount. Its immediate neighbours are the republic of Guinea on the North, and the republic of Liberia on the South East. On the West it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. North of the peninsula mountains lies the natural harbour, one of the finest in the world. The peninsula shelters the harbour from the Atlantic waves, and tidal currents cleanse it deeply. The harbour, therefore, offers an anchorage larger and safer than any other in West Africa. Since the 15th Century it has continued to attract scores of traders and seafarers. There are two major seasons in the country; the rainy season, usually from May to October, and the dry season, through the rest of the year. It is usually hot throughout the year, but about December to February cold dry winds from the Sahara bring in a short cold season called the *harmattan*. During the

harmattan season temperatures can be as low as 45⁰F (7⁰C) in the North, and humidity is low. The rest of the dry season is very hot and humid with temperatures up to 90⁰F (32⁰C).

Sierra Leone has a population of about four and the half million.³ The country is divided up into four regions. These are the Western Area, where the capital Freetown is located; the Northern province, the Southern province, and the Eastern province. There are about sixteen major ethnic groups in the country. There are diversities in aspects like origin and language among the various ethnic groups. But due to a long period of intermingling, in terms of customs, habits, and manners the similarities between the various ethnic groups are significant enough to give them all the distinct identity of being Sierra Leoneans.⁴ The varied terrain and climate have resulted in a diverse pattern of vegetation. The staple food rice, together with a variety of other crops, some for export, form part of the economic activities carried out.⁵ However the rich mineral resources of the country have been the mainstay of its economy. The minerals include platinum discovered in 1929, gold in 1930, followed by diamonds in 1932, iron ore in 1933, chrome in 1937, bauxite in 1963 and rutile in 1967.⁶

It is known that people lived in what became Sierra Leone at least 2500 years BCE. The inhabitants of this region, known as the stone age inhabitants, made simple stone tools for hunting and farming purposes. By about 600 CE the inhabitants moved into the Iron Age with the discovery of the use of iron. They now produced skilfully crafted weapons and utensils.⁷

In the 15th Century, there were already small towns and villages developing along the coast of Sierra Leone. During this period the Portuguese sailors began voyaging down the West African coast in search of a sea route to India. The Portuguese sailors made contact with the coastal peoples, and began trading with them. This led to an increase in the development of towns and villages along the coast. Other European ships also called in regularly at the bays along the Freetown peninsula to get fresh water and to trade. In 1462 during one such visit, a Portuguese sailor, Pedro da Cintra, named this peninsula area 'Serra Lyoa' meaning 'Lion Range'. Initially it was only the mountainous peninsula that was referred to as 'Serra Lyoa'. In 1787 the British founded a colony for freed slaves in the peninsula area, and translated the name 'Serra Lyoa' to Sierra Leone. British control expanded to include large areas

outside of the peninsula, known as the Sierra Leone hinterland. The hinterland was added to the colony in 1896 to form the country of Sierra Leone as it is known today.⁸

2. *The Limba*

Among the local inhabitants in Sierra Leone before the coming of the British were the Limba. The Limba, like most other ethnic groups of Sierra Leone, had migrated from the Futa Jalon region of French Guinea. Max Gorvie reports: 'The tribe probably originated from the visit of one Tonko Santigi who came from Northern Guinea on a wandering hunting expedition.....His friends finally joined him, and established a community.'⁹

The migration took place from the eighth century onward, when various small groups of Limba gradually spread from the Wara Wara hills, located just on the border with French Guinea, to occupy much of their present locality in the North. By the sixteenth century, much of the settlement must have been effected since the Portuguese explorer Alvares d'Almada, noted them at that time in much of their present locality.¹⁰

There are five subgroups of Limba. They speak a language associated with the Mel group which Greenberg broadly includes among the 'West Atlantic' group of languages.¹¹ Four main regional dialects can be identified. However, there are no clear-cut boundaries between dialects; most of the time any speaker of one dialect can understand the speaker of any other dialect. So the Limba say, 'The Limba language is one, and the Limba people are one'.

Initially the Limba lived in settlement groups with their leaders. The leaders were usually warriors, who through conquest and other exploits obtained vast amounts of land and a large following.¹² The powers of the leaders even though vital were not absolute. The council of elders, as well as the secret societies, served as effective checks and balances. The community was geared towards self-enhancement and well-being. Socio-economic activities were organised around the kinship and family. It was basically a subsistence agricultural community engaged in the cultivation of land, hunting game, and rearing domestic animals. The individual families within the settlement shared land and labour in common. Cohesion was based on a simple life-style based on similar beliefs, norms and values. The religious beliefs helped to shape and foster the community solidarity and well-being.¹³

By 1960, the period at which this study commences, the Limba had settled down to occupying an area of over 19,000 sq. mls. in the Northern Province.¹⁴ The powers of their leaders were now shared first with the district commissioner as representative of the British colonial power, and then with the district officer as representative of the Central government in Freetown. However, many of the earlier established customs and traditions survived unchanged. The Limba people still kept to their traditional values associated with rituals and sacrifices. From the North, they migrated to other parts of the country, particularly to Freetown, which is considered to be the most popular destination for migrants from all areas.

3. *Freetown*

Freetown is the trading capital and chief port for the provinces of Sierra Leone. It is also the industrial, as well as the political centre of the country.¹⁵ The fact that there had been local inhabitants, coupled with the migration patterns of individuals from the provinces, also makes Freetown the ethnically diverse capital of Sierra Leone. Freetown is also basically the home of the Krio ethnic group. The Krio group came into being as a result of the integration of freed slave settlers, recaptives and settlers from the provinces. It is important to mention something about the Krios, as the first form of Christianity that took root in the country was spearheaded by this group. To date, Freetown, which is the official home of this group, still bears the distinctive hallmark of a religion that was imported and adapted into an African context.

The original members of the Krio ethnic group belonged to a multiplicity of ethnic groups and represented a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. On the one hand the freed slave settlers came from Nova Scotia and Jamaica. On the other hand a significant number of recaptives came from the interior of Sierra Leone, and the rest belonged to over three hundred different ethnic groups all over West Africa.¹⁶

The first group of freed slave settlers arrived from Nova Scotia in 1792. They set the basis for the type of community that was to evolve among those who came to regard themselves as Krios. Many of the freed slave settlers were already Christians before arriving in Freetown. This common religious belief, as well as the shared experience of enslavement, proved to be a binding factor fostering *kabudu*.

The settlers came as a community whose binding factor was the shared experience of being enslaved. To enhance the community nature of the settlement a constitution was drawn up for them by Granville Sharpe. The constitution had a social contract which reads:

Every ten householders would form a tithing, every ten tithings a hundred, collectively responsible for preserving order and keeping watch against outside enemies, each householder with a voice in a common council.¹⁷

To help the community to be orderly, thereby fostering its solidarity and well-being, a structure was created. Headmen or elders were chosen to prepare the settlers for responsible government. Every prospective settler had to sign a contract which included a clause where each 'binds and obliges himself or herself to the other settlers for the protection and preservation of their common freedom'.¹⁸

On the whole the Krio community which eventually emerged tended to be Christian yet African. Part of its distinctively African character could be seen in the fact that the Krios adapted and modified various traditional practices like the pouring of libation to the ancestors. Fyfe observes:

Though Krios assumed unquestioningly that the Christian religion and European customs and morality were superior to indigenous African religion, customs, and morality, they still retained an African identity. As officials and missionaries they practised and preached the alien doctrines they had grown up to believe. Yet they remained Africans, proud of the community they had created, and ready to transplant its idiosyncratic ways wherever they went.¹⁹

For the Limbas, and the Krios, and in fact throughout the country this concept of *kabudu* or community is vital. The concept as defined in the introduction helps to explain the sense of communal bonding and solidarity. This can be clearly seen in the expressions of traditional life as exemplified in the village and family settings.

4. *The Village kabudu*

There are seven Limba chiefdoms in the North, falling into the three districts of Kambia, Bombali and Koinadugu.²⁰ The towns and villages in the Chiefdoms vary considerably in terms of size, population, and wealth, but for all intents and purposes, they are identical in terms of internal structures. The traditional institution of chieftaincy is an effective system of administration. Each chiefdom is ruled by a hierarchy descending from a paramount chief at the top, through a number of section chiefs, to village headmen at the bottom. The paramount chief has authority over all the section chiefs, and he is also usually the

immediate ruler of the capital town, where he resides. The section chiefs preside over a number of villages. They handle disputes and the more serious matters from all over the territory that the village headmen are unable to deal with. The village headmen settle local disputes, and are the spokesmen for the villages whenever the need arises. The Temnes and Bullom call their chief *Obai*; the Limba call him *Gbaku*; the Yalunka and Soso call him *Manga*; Mandingo, Koranko and Kono call him *Mansa*; and the Mende call him *Mahin*.²¹

Before the many changes invented by the central government in Freetown, chiefs were always elected from the 'ruling families' or 'ruling houses' within the chiefdoms. Traditionally the 'ruling families' or 'ruling houses' came into existence as a result of an individual's military prowess, or his skills as a hunter or diviner through which he became recognised as leader and subsequent chief of the village or town.²²

There are slight variations in succession patterns among the various ethnic groups. The important fact is that the incumbent must have shown some outstanding quality as a warrior, hunter or diviner, and must also have the advantage of being old. He must come from the ruling family or ruling house.²³ Those eligible include sons of the late chief, and his brothers by the same father and their sons. Sometimes they take it in turns to supply candidates to be crowned. With the exception of the Mendes, women are never crowned as chiefs.²⁴ Even though the incumbent is recognised as chief by the central government, once elected he still has to go through an elaborate traditional installation ceremony.

The installation ceremony usually includes a period of separation, when the incumbent is removed from his home and immediate family, and isolated in the sacred bush of the leading male society, or a hut constructed for this purpose. There is the period of seclusion or transition known as *kanta*. The length of time spent in *kanta* varied from one ethnic group to the next, ranging from one month to a year; for instance the Limba incumbent would spend one month, and the Temne incumbent would spend a year. While in *kanta*, the incumbent is groomed by the leading male secret society on his duties as chief. After *kanta*, there is the period of incorporation when the new chief is reincorporated into society by a public installation ceremony.²⁵ Among the Limba a deceased chief was never said to have died, but to have 'gone round the hill', thereby giving way to another. During seclusion the deceased chief who is still considered to be active, forges a link with the incumbent that makes for continuity. In seclusion the incumbent chief is groomed by the Limba *gbangbani* society,

considered to be the most powerful male secret society, on the duties of a chief. At installation the chief receives the title *Alimamy*. This should precede any use of the chief's name as a sign of acceptance, and respect to him.

Acceptance of, and respect to, the chief is very crucial, and this is largely determined by his qualities and virtues. Despite changes, the ideal qualities and virtues expected of a chief are still widely upheld among the Limba. The foremost virtue attributed to the chief is the ability to 'speak' (*gbonkoli*). This forms one of the main duties about which the chief receives instructions when in *kanta*. *Gbonkoli* has two aspects to it: Firstly, the chief is expected to be friendly and speak kindly to those around him. He must never be proud or remote from his subjects.²⁶ He should always 'speak well' (*a gbonkoli wulohoi*) to his subjects, and be ready both to listen and reply to what they say. In practice a Limba chief usually sits in his veranda replying to members of his village who come throughout the day bringing him greetings, as well as important visitors who come to notify him of their presence. Finnegan notes that even though the Limba assert that only God can make a chief, by moving peoples' hearts to vote for one man as opposed to another, yet it also depends on the candidate's behaviour and character: 'If a man greets you well, your heart is glad. If he greets you badly, or if he eats by himself, God will not allow him to be chief'.²⁷ The other aspect is related to his role as chief judge. The primary role of the chief is judicial. He is to help in maintaining harmonious relations between his subjects. When a case is tried by him, the decision reached must be followed by an exhortation to the contending parties to agree. He has a conciliatory role as he judges contending parties, not so much to punish, as to reconcile. By seeking to reconcile individuals within the community, the community's well-being and solidarity are enhanced.

The chief is also expected to be kind and generous. He keeps an open house, shares his food with others. He is to be acquainted with major occurrences in his village, and he shares the joys and concerns of his subjects. This generosity and kindness is reciprocal as his subjects share in his joys and concerns. They also bring him gifts of rice, cattle and other goods, particularly after harvest. From the gifts he is able to help the many people who go to him for assistance.

The chief's religious functions are exercised rather in his role of general supervisor than as the specific mediator between the ancestors and the people. He is to be consulted and his

permission obtained for any major event to take place in his village. For instance, even though the chief is not the head of the leading secret societies, no initiation ceremony can be held without his approval. He has to be consulted by the leaders, with whom he discusses the dates, and gives his approval and blessing before they can proceed. The chief should be present or send a representative to all important community rituals.²⁸

For the community to function smoothly, and for its well-being and solidarity to be maintained, the hierarchical structures created are adhered to. The Limba chief has numerous functions as chief judge, administrator and policy definer of the community. This high position of responsibility leaves the chief vulnerable. He is liable to the temptation of becoming power drunk. When the chief yields to this temptation he becomes tyrannical abusing his rights and privileges. This in turn upsets the equilibrium of the community. To prevent the abuse of power the chief rules with the aid of his council of elders. They serve as checks and balances to his rule. Without their advice and consent the chief cannot act. Continuous abuse of his powers means a deviation from acceptable community norms. When this happens the interest of the community must take precedence. The chief as the anti-social element has to be removed. Sometimes the chief is persuaded to resign, and transfer authority to another with the consent of the elders. Sometimes an adamant chief is forcefully removed by the elders: One way of achieving a forceful removal is through the administration of poison, as prescribed by the elders. Again sometimes an abusive chief is removed through 'witchcraft'. The Limba argue that when a person becomes chief, many who are jealous of him will want to harm him through witchcraft. If the chief becomes abusive, and ill treats his people, God will remove his protection from him. Consequently, in this unprotective state the witchcraft will take effect, and the chief may die.²⁹

However, before the chief is removed, his abuse of power must have been prolonged, and detrimental to the well-being of the community. The council of elders have to act in unison. His removal should not be done out of spite or vindictiveness, as these in themselves are anti-social actions. The decision reached is binding on all, otherwise a breach has occurred in the balance of power, and this further affects the cohesion and equilibrium of the community. The council of elders are usually old men, chosen for their wisdom and experience. They command the respect of the people, and have a reputation for speaking and judging well. They include the *pika wo* (speaker). He is the principal executive and judicial officer of the chiefdom. In court the chief is addressed through him, like the Mende

lavale.³⁰ There is also the *sesa* (cousin) of the chief who takes a central part at both the installation and death ceremonies of the chief. In public he lends the chief his support, but has the right to criticise him in private, making him aware of his mistakes and shortcomings. The *sesa* is a valuable check to the chief. He can be very honest as he is not afraid of losing favour.³¹

Apart from this social structure with the Paramount chief at the head, the village community is also closely knit together by a network of other relationships that emphasise corporateness instead of individualism. The village is a recognised religious, economic, social and political unit, that is comprised of different families that are not necessarily of the same kinship or religious grouping. The village becomes the basis of *kabudu*, as it is regarded as the main centre for most purposes in life. Much of the day-to-day activities are conducted in the open compounds within the village. It is at this local level where the villagers know each other, that true neighbourliness and community solidarity exists. At this level there is a common culture, residency, language and occupation. People experience a shared identity and many shared meanings to life. Members participate actively in celebrating each other rites of passage and life crisis rituals. So intense is the bonding that even when individuals of the same village meet outside of their village, they still refer to themselves as *fambul*, that is belonging to the same roots. As *fambul* they are obligated to help each other regardless of the cost entailed. Sometimes this cost could be very high as in the case of politicians who have had to squander public funds on behalf of their village or town *fambul*, or give them jobs at the expense of those better qualified who do not hail from the same village or town. This aspect is dealt with on page 129.

The individual establishes his personal identity within the larger village community. The community is therefore the central focus for the individual, who is regarded not as separate entity, but a facet of the community. His life has meaning only as part of the community.³² Even though biologically an individual has to be born, yet there is an interplay of biology and culture, as the individual is made what he is through the prescriptions of his community. As Mbiti says: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'.³³ The individual owes it therefore as a duty to the community to be other-centred as opposed to self-centred. His rights must come secondary to the exercise of duty to the community.

This community view of life does not prevent the development of the individual, nor does it discourage personal initiative and self reliance. What it does is to place the values of the community above that of the individuals. In this way the individual is made aware of the fact that he is in co-existence with other individuals. His activities therefore, must promote his well-being as an individual, while at the same time not negating the well-being of others.

The individuals within this community cooperate with each other in meeting the basic necessities of life. The realisation that tedious farm work loses much of its burden when done by the community led to the establishment of labour groups in most villages, comprised mostly of young men. For instance, each Limba village has a labour group known as *kuneh* (company). The farms of *kuneh* members are tilled in turns. The *kuneh* could also be hired by non-members, who then pay wages on a daily basis, and supply the meals for the workers. The *kuneh* not only utilises the working capacity of the young, it also ensures that the work is done in a speedy and efficient manner. This corporate solidarity does not exclude the chief as he is obliged to contribute somebody from his household, usually a son, to join the *kuneh*.³⁴

The corporate solidarity existing as opposed to individualism has the result that virtues of sharing and caring are regarded very highly in the villages/towns. The individual sees it as his social duty to embrace the virtues of kindness, hard work, generosity, discipline, respect for age and life in general, honour and harmony. These values are taught to children and kept vivid by songs and proverbs. Some of the proverbs in the Creole language are: *Fodom fo mi a fodom fo yu* (fall down for me, I will fall down for you), meaning if you seek my interest, I shall seek yours; *An go, an Kam* (hand go, hand come), meaning one good turn deserves another; *Wan an bangul no de shek* (a single hand bangle makes no sound), meaning no one is an island, we need each other for survival; *Ren no de fodom na wan man domot* (rain does not fall on the doorstep of just one individual), meaning the problems of life do not just befall one individual, and do not be happy when somebody else is experiencing pain and loss.

Respect for age and life in general are also more important than individual achievements. Even the very old people are valued not just for their achievements, but also because of their wisdom and experience. They are still regarded and respected as members of the community. They are there contributing their wisdom and experience in the important

process of decision making. Every important decision is made not just by the individual but collectively as a community.

The individuals in the community are imbued with collective social and moral values upheld by the ancestors and other sanctions. Alone, an individual is in potential danger, either to himself or as a threat to the solidarity and well-being of the community; within a properly constituted group he is 'safe', sharing the aspirations and behaviour of the group. To safeguard the welfare of the community and the individuals within it, there are many taboos and regulations to be observed.³⁵ The observance of taboos and regulations implies a union between each individual in the community and the spiritual world. Such observance gives individuals a sense of security and unity. The individuals have the moral obligation to observe the taboos, and compliance assures them of guidance and protection from the spiritual.³⁶ There are secret societies, whose function is to ensure the maintenance of the regulatory practices of the individuals within the community. Even though the Limba do not have a well documented view on morality regulations, many of my informants subscribe to the views documented on the Mendes. Among the Mendes, there is the *Humoi* society which regulates sexual conduct. The society forbids *simongama* (incest), and provides rules and regulations to govern sexual behaviour within the whole community. It is forbidden for anyone to have sex during the day or in the farm bush. This is seen as a defilement of mother earth, and will ruin the prospect of a good harvest. It is also forbidden to have sex with a pregnant woman or woman having her menses, as she is considered to be in a state of impurity. The genitals of members of the opposite are also not to be touched during the day, as this is equivalent to actual sexual intercourse.³⁷ There are various categories of incest among the Mendes, such as, a man should not sit, or sleep, on the bed of his mother-in-law. Equally, a husband and wife should not have sex on the bed of the wife's mother. This is incestuous on the grounds that the son-in-law would have by association had sex with the mother-in-law. The natural relationship between them would have been disrupted, and their relative roles in their respective families would have been accordingly altered.³⁸

Such taboos and regulations are important means of maintaining the sanctity and harmony of the community.³⁹ The community demands of each individual certain modes of behaviour that are consonant with the promotion of its well-being. Each individual must subordinate his interests to the moral order of the community. The real contribution an individual can make to the community depends on his personal well-being. This is a spiritual condition

which is made manifest in the physical and economic well-being of the individuals concerned. The well-being of the community as such is a reflection of the morality of the individuals who constitute it. So those who violate or disrupt the harmony of the community are considered to be anti-social, and therefore destructive forces endangering the life of the community. Purification rites therefore feature prominently in removing the forces seen as inhibitory to progress, and restoring the vitality of the community. For instance in the case of a *Humoi* regulation having been violated, the offender/s are said to fall ill. The offender/s including members of their immediate family, have to go through purification rites conducted by the *Humoi* priestess. As the offence is against the community itself, the purification rituals include a public confession by the offender/s, and a public flogging and bathing.⁴⁰

In the same vein the practice of witchcraft is regarded all over the country as anti-social and therefore a destructive force endangering the life of the community. There are no distinctions made in Sierra Leone between a witch or a sorcerer, or between witches who operate nocturnally, and those who commit anti-social acts.⁴¹ Witchcraft describes any deviation from the accepted normal code of behaviour. This includes not only the disruption of the harmonious relation of the community and the factors which detract from the well-being and maintenance of the community, but any disruption or violation of the well-being of the individual with regards to his success, prosperity, health and reproductive functions.

The term witchcraft embraces a wide range of situations which are regarded as inimical to the well-being of the community. All forms of incest and unnatural sex relationships may be the result of witchcraft or the perpetration of witchcraft. All forms of acute incivility and gross wickedness are witchcraft. Miscarriages, death in childbirth, and constant business failures are all attributed to witchcraft. Equally, outstanding achievements, like business success are attributed to witchcraft. Absence in funerals or failure to congratulate a newly delivered mother makes the offender guilty of witchcraft. Also utterances made in anger, particularly during quarrels, can be used in witchcraft accusations. For example, in Kissy village in the east-end of Freetown two co-wives, Isatu and Marie, were having a bitter dispute. In the heat of the dispute Isatu threatened Marie with a simple utterance, 'you will see'. Two weeks later the child of Marie suddenly took ill. Isatu was accused of witchcraft because of the utterance she had made earlier on.⁴²

Witchcraft is also associated with poison. The poison can be in the form of powder that is blown on the victim, who then contracts an incurable disease. It can be placed in food, so people avoid eating in the homes of strangers, and those thought to have evil tendencies. The Limba people are said to practice poisoning under the term witchcraft on a chief who abuses power. Finnegan notes: 'When a chief treats his people well, God may not allow him to be killed by witchcraft. However if he becomes abusive and ill-treats his people, God may allow the witchcraft to take effect and he may die'.⁴³

Witches are said to possess a mysterious inherent power to harm others. They attack their victims when motivated by envy, jealousy and greed. They not only destroy life, but also cause other disasters and misfortunes to befall their victims. The belief is so real that in almost every corner of the country, people guard themselves against them, by the use of protective charms, amulets, medicines and the potent force of a curse known as swears. Some of these are worn on the person, others are hung on doors or other parts of the house, and some are placed in food.

Belief in witchcraft provides an answer for the secondary causes of illness, misfortune and death. It provides an answer to the question, 'Why'? Whenever the source of an illness or misfortune is not obvious, the explanation that follows most ordinarily assigns the event to the powers of witchcraft. For example in 1987, when I was in Kamabai, I was told a story of a youth who had returned to his village from Freetown during the long vacation in July. He had gone out with other youths to work on a farm, when he was bitten by a poisonous snake. He died of the bite, as the farm was a long distance away, preventing the other youths from seeking help on time. Everybody in the village became convinced it must be due to witchcraft. They asked: 'Why did this happen to that particular youth and not another'? 'Why on that occasion and not another'? The conclusion was that the snake was 'sent' by someone jealous of the fact that the boy was in Freetown receiving schooling. A diviner was able to determine that the assumption was correct, and he named the culprits.

In yet another incident a Limba boy was brought to Freetown from Kamakwie. He had a wasting disease that was eating up his face and penis. The boy had woken up one morning with terrible pains on his face and genital. By evening of the same day, the areas in which he had been experiencing pain, had broken out in sores. He was taken to a diviner who diagnosed witchcraft. Further divination revealed the boy's mother as the culprit. When confronted she confessed. During confession she stated that it was her turn to provide a

victim for her witch company. She had no one else to give but her son. Fortunately for the boy, she said they had not quite finished with him, before daybreak, so he would live and not die. The boy was brought for medical treatment in Freetown. He underwent a series of operations that included the grafting of skin to his jaw, and the insertion of a tube where the penis had wasted. Even though he is alive he still bears the scars of the witchery.⁴⁴

Belief in witchcraft is a reality. Even in cases where there is no physical evidence of the operation of witches, people do confess to being witches. In Kamabia some years back, a childless co-wife confessed that she was responsible for the death of a child by her co-wife. She was asked to demonstrate how it was done. She asked for a normal, whole pawpaw to be placed at the centre of the hut. She sat down looking at it. Later she told them to lift the pawpaw. Even though it looked normal outwardly, it sank inwards when lifted. It was discovered that it had become hollow on the inside.⁴⁵

So intense is this belief in witchcraft that there are diviners who specialise in identifying the culprits. Before identifying a culprit, the diviner has to take an oath that he will tell the truth. This should prevent him from allowing personal biases and spitefulness from influencing the result of his findings. When this happens it is a breach of community norms and well-being. Identifying a culprit is not just the case for those who operate nocturnally. Even those who might steal a husband or be harsh in the treatment of a child might be taken to the diviner for acting anti-socially. But the most common causes taken to the diviner result from the unexplainable, something that might have occurred mysteriously. For instance, the Limba have an ordeal administered by the *Babari* (an expert witchfinder). After divination, as in the case of the youth who died of snake bite, a culprit is named. If the person denies knowledge of the crime, then he would have to go through the *kubari* (ordeal administered by the *Babari*). For the ordeal, the *Babari* collects the bark of the *kubari* tree from the bush. He also collects a stem from a banana tree, and a white chicken. While reciting some incantations, he squeezes the liquid from the *kubari* tree into the left eye of the chicken, and on the banana stem. He says: 'If the accused is guilty let the eyes of the chicken, and the banana stem be destroyed by dawn, otherwise let them remain as they are'. During this period, the accused waits in a hut wearing white to show innocence. Both the eye of the chicken, and the banana stem are examined the next morning. If they remain clear, the accused is innocent and receives gifts in compensation. But if the objects are cloudy, he is guilty and must confess not only to his own guilt, but that of his companions.⁴⁶

Another important ceremony is the one performed to free and purify surviving relatives of a deceased witch from the guilt and polluting influences of the witch. The ceremony is known as *masain* by the Limba. For this ceremony the relatives of the deceased witch provide the following items: rice, palm oil, a white chicken, and the trunk of a banana tree. The ingredients provided except for the tree trunk are used in preparing a ceremonial meal which only the relatives are allowed to eat. Whatever is not consumed is thrown away. After this the relatives bath themselves with medicinal water prepared for that occasion by the diviner. The diviner then ties a rope on the banana trunk, and he is chased out of the village by the relatives joined by the villagers. The dragging of the trunk they say is symbolic of the polluting effects of the witch leaving the relatives and the village for good. If this ceremony is not performed, relatives are treated with suspicion and can even be ostracised, as the following incident demonstrates. Sometime ago in Kamabai, there was a violent clash involving supporters of two opposing political factions. During the upheaval a youth got killed. His death was attributed to one particular individual, who they say is the author of violence in that area. Several stories were related to me, when it was believed that this individual had engineered and encouraged violence. I wanted to know why he was like that. I was told that the underlying factor was that his father had been a witch. When he died he was not given a proper burial, and is not mentioned when the communal ancestors are remembered. More importantly *masain* was not performed for this surviving son. The son bears a grudge against the community for not remembering his deceased father. Also because *masain* was not performed he has some dangerously polluting elements from his father affecting him, causing him to be a danger to the community.⁴⁷

5. *Family kabudu*

In Sierra Leone when people speak of the family they are referring to the extended family, rather than the nuclear. The extended family embraces the kin group, and is further widened by polygamy. Many villages owe their beginning to a gathering of several families, linked together by factors like birth and marriage. In the villages there are family compounds, with houses built in a circle around an open space. The Limba call it *kuru kuru*. These compounds are based on kinship ties, and are made up of several household groups. Those of one compound trace their descent back to a common ancestry. Within the compound the most important group is the household or family, known as *banka* by the Limba. A

household is comprised of those from the same grandfather or father. In other words a household is comprised of the grandfather, the father and his wives, his sons, their wives and children, widowed and unmarried daughters, as well as those who have attached themselves as children to the head of the household. Sometimes they all live in the same house, or in different houses constructed close to each other within the compound.⁴⁸

The head of the household is usually the oldest member. The head had the social responsibility of ensuring that division of labour was adhered to; In the case of farm labour, the men fell trees, the women help with planting and harvesting of crops, and children chase birds and drive rodents from the ripening crops. The head of the household is also the spiritual head of the unit. He or she organises and leads prayers to the Supreme being, and sacrifices and rituals to the ancestors, as well as any other spirit beings the family is associated with. The system is based on reciprocity; the head has authority over those under him, and those under him owe responsibility to him. The communal existence provides the distinguishing characteristic, for the pursuit of common economic, social and religious interests.

Descent and inheritance are largely patrilineal in the country, although a special relationship could exist between a person and his or her family on the mother's side. This relationship is very significant among the Mende, where a man stands in special relationship to his mother's brothers (*kenya*). All the mother's brothers have power over the sister's children, with the eldest possessing the greatest authority. As an indication of the power which the brothers have over a sister's children, formerly a *kenya* could give his nephew as security for debt, and even sell him as a domestic slave. In recent times a *kenya* can send his nephew into exile as a sacrifice, acting on instructions from a diviner. Among some families the *kenya* should provide a wife for his sister's son. No marriage is considered in order without the presence of the bride's uncles from the mother's side. Besides his presence at weddings, the *kenya* is called in, when a death occurs. The deceased's abdomen of a sister's child may not be cut open to ascertain witchcraft without the permission of the *kenya*. The nephew considers the blessing of his *kenya* to be more important than that of his real father.⁴⁹

Most families have a totem, usually an animal or bird, which it is forbidden to hurt, kill, or eat. The totem animal or bird is said to be connected in some way with the origin or preservation of the family. The family includes all those who trace their lineage back to the

original family. They could be miles apart and not all part of the same extended family. The animal or bird is usually said to have become a totem, after rescuing the founder of the kingroup, from some form of a peril or danger, or guiding him to the spot where the compound is. What the totem animal or bird did was probably very remarkable for a union to be established between it and the founder. The totem is a revered symbol. It is believed that a supernatural influence resides in it. Therefore, to kill the family totem is to kill the source of life of that family. A story that illustrates this point reads:

Long, long ago one of my fathers was bathing in the river. He was caught by a crocodile and carried to a hole under the bank of the river. The crocodile then went to call his companion. However, on the bank above the hole a *mbende* (deer) was giving birth to her young, and in her pains she stamped and stamped so hard that finally one of her feet broke through the bank into the hole beneath. When the man saw the foot he said, 'I will dig that hole bigger and escape', and he did. When he had escaped he called all his family together and said, "Look, this *mbende* is now our brother. None of us must ever eat this animal again".⁵⁰

The escape assumes a miraculous character, with the deer as the one providing the means of escape for the man that was beyond help. The deer therefore has become a supernatural influence and the family totem. If a family member unintentionally hurts, kills, or eats a totem animal or bird, no harm would befall him. But if he does so intentionally he would become very ill. Rites of purification are to be performed on the culprit before he would be restored to health again.

The family is the basic unit of economic, social and religious life. Sharing and caring is at its deepest level within the family. Family members co-operate with each other in economic activities like farming; in social activities like mutual participation in the various rites of passage; and religiously in offering sacrifices to their common ancestors. Due to this deep sense of sharing and cooperation, the family is an interdependent network in which each member sees the needs of the others, and those of the family as a whole, and responds accordingly. This leads not only to the building up of oneself, but others. In this building up of oneself and others the individual identity is shaped and nurtured.

The family unit is an important structure of social and moral control, from which it is almost impossible to dissociate oneself. The individual within the family is thought to have no identity apart from his family. He becomes a reflection of the morals and values upheld by his family. Whatever the family considers to be morally acceptable or incorrect becomes acceptable or unacceptable for the individuals within the family. The idea that an individual's identity is shaped in terms of the family is an accepted norm in society.

Sometimes if a person behaves in an unacceptable way, like a youth using obscenities when his elders are present, the first question people would ask in Creole is *udat pikin da wande?* (whose child is this?), meaning 'what family does he belong to'? If the answer reflects that the individual is from a family capable of using obscenities, those inquiring might go on to say, *bon mi a fiba yu*, (give birth to me and I resemble you), meaning 'a child develops the character traits of his parents'. Another expression used is *orinch no ba bia lem*, (an orange tree does not produce lime fruit), meaning 'like parents like children'. An individual does not behave differently from the expected family norm.

The individual is obliged to his family and depends on them. John V. Taylor, in his study on primal religions in Africa, notes a system that is general in the region:

Man is a family. This living chain of humanity in which the tides of world-energy ebb and flow most strongly, stands at the heart of the great totality of being... The underlying conviction remains that an individual who is cut off from the communal organism is nothing. As the glow of a coal depends upon its remaining in the fire, so the vitality, the psychic security, the very humanity of a man, depends on his integration into the family.⁵¹

Within the family group the elderly are not discarded as useless. It is very unusual for the elderly to live alone. They live with their children in households often to the third generation.⁵² The elderly retain their place, and are valued for their wisdom and experience by their younger kin. In times of crisis situations and on every major occasion like weddings, they are consulted and their opinions accepted sometimes without questioning. The elderly are not addressed by names but by terms like father which depict respect. (*Keke* among the Mende, *Kas* among the Temne, *Yapo* among the Limba, and *Kemoh* among the Kuranko).

The most valuable assets within the family group are the children. Children are considered to be investments for the future. Traditionally, when farm lands were in abundance, the more children a man had the more farm hands he had. This, in turn, brought him increase in his farm yields. Children thus became a symbol of wealth and social prestige in the community. More recently, with the decrease in farming activities, education plays an important part. It is not unusual for the wealthy or better-off members of the family or kin group to offer a home to an orphan or a child from a poorer family within the kin group just to give the child better opportunities.

The traditional educational system was a way of instilling into the individual a sense of community solidarity and responsibility that went beyond family and kinship solidarity and responsibility. Each stage of life had the educational system designed for it, from birth to adulthood.⁵³ The first education and socialisation process of the child begins within this unit. The child develops characteristics and ways of thinking of the parents and those he is living and growing up with. Their values and habits become inculcated in him. For example, at an early age a child is taught respect for elders. He should not address anyone but his peers by their names; he must use titles like sister, brother, auntie, uncle. He is also taught to share all he has with his brothers, sisters and other children in the household. They eat in communal bowls, sleep and play with the same toys. Their working capacity is utilised as bird chasers on the farms. They carry loads, and fetch water and fire-sticks for the household. Sometimes the communal way of living becomes so entrenched that the children cannot do things as individuals.

Even in the big towns like Freetown, the fundamental family unit remains. Working parents, for instance, could rely on parents, grandparents and other relations to provide help with baby-sitting, and finances. In other words almost every Sierra Leonean relies on the material and emotional support of his family *kabudu* for survival. This close network of the family unit is a constant source of stability and security in a changing society. The changes will be described later. Individuals within this unit participate in and benefit from a system of social welfare that is real, immediate and caring. This is not only evident in the daily routines, but also in the celebration of the various rites of passage.

To enhance family solidarity and co-operation family meetings are held occasionally, during which family issues like weddings and funerals are discussed. On such occasions family disputes are also settled by the elders, and the aims and objectives of the family reaffirmed. Sacrifices are also conducted to the ancestors on such occasions, since the family includes not just the living, but the dead and those yet unborn.

6.A *The Traditional religious concept of kabudu*

As religious beliefs and social behaviour are indivisible, the religious aspect of the community is of vital importance. The community is incomplete without the religious aspect.⁵⁴ The religious beliefs help shape social values, fostering community solidarity and

well-being. Religion finds expression in the whole life of most Sierra Leoneans. It is present in their eating and drinking, in agriculture, fishing, hunting, procreation and every aspect of life.

There is a religious dimension to the loyalty expressed in the village or family *kabudu*. The whole community forms the worshipping group in which everybody is an active participant. This whole community includes the living, the dead and those yet unborn. In Limba traditional religion there is belief in the Supreme Being. He is thought to be the creator and ultimate controller of the world. He is believed to have once lived with men on earth, but due to men's misdemeanour, he retired and now lives in the sky. One story narrated by the Limba indicates this belief:

Kanu Masala lived in the world, together with mankind and the animals of the bush. But, because man, the animals, and the various elements, such as fire and water kept quarrelling and involving *Kanu Masala* in their disputes, refusing to take his advice to desist, *Kanu Masala* went away up above in the sky.⁵⁵

The names for God also indicate he retired from the world and now lives in the sky. The Mende call him *Ngewo*, meaning in the sky, from long ago.⁵⁶ The Limba call him *Kanu Masala*, meaning the chief, who has gone.⁵⁷ He is the ultimate authority from whom everything derives: humans, animals, the other constituent elements of creation, together with the laws and customs of society. Everything happens by his ultimate will and design. So in prayers and salutations a common phrase used is *thor kor bah Kanu* (by the grace of *Kanu*)

Even though God is recognised as the creator and ultimate controller of the universe, his transcendent nature is always emphasised. Despite his ultimate control of human activities, no regular, public prayers are offered to him. He is not readily approached for the minor needs of life, although in crisis situations anyone can call on him directly. He is thought to be the last resort of the desperate. When all else fails they appeal to him directly. In analysing God's transcendence Sawyerr makes a comparison between the religious and social structure in societies with kings or chiefs. Like God, these rulers are not easily approachable but may be reached through intermediaries. A king or chief is normally distant from ordinary men, but in times of danger any of his subjects may run to him. The attitude towards God is said to reflect this relationship with earthly rulers.⁵⁸

6.B *The Spirits*

There is belief in the spirits, who are thought to have the power to influence the actions and activities of the living. The Limba call them *waali*, the Mende call them *ngafanga*, and the Temne call them *krifi*. Unlike the Supreme Being and the ancestors, the spirits are associated with individuals rather than whole villages. Individuals seek association with the spirits for such things as fame, power, popularity and wealth. Possessors of spirits usually carry objects representing the spirits in the form of small smooth stones, knives, rings, head-ties, bags and tins. The object representative of the spirit must be hidden on the person or kept in a secluded area in the house, compound or farm. Offerings are to be made, and obligations fulfilled, by the possessors as prescribed by the spirits. Generally the spirits are considered to be evil or potentially dangerous. Even in cases where they give rewards to possessors, it is always conditional. For instance, a spirit, after carrying out the wishes of a possessor, will ask for his payment to be made in the form of a village or an individual who will face sudden misfortune or even death. Failure to comply leaves the possessor with misfortunes ranging from poverty, incurable insanity, and even death.

An example of an evil spirit known commonly among most of the ethnic groups is the mermaid. Among the Krios it is known as *mami wata*, among the Limba *yarroh*, and among the Mende *tingoi*. This spirit is said to assume the form of a mermaid, living in the river. She is said to have long flowing hair, and is usually seen sitting on a rock combing it. She appears mostly to fishermen and those who ply the river on business. If she sees a man she fancies, she leaves her comb behind when she disappears into the river. The man must pick up the comb, and conceal it in his house. At night the spirit would appear to him in a dream demanding that the comb be returned. The man should refuse and demand wealth for its return. He must never return the comb, as it is claimed he would become very poor, or even die. The spirit will then make him very rich on condition that they contract a marital alliance. This involves the strictest fidelity on the part of the man, even if he was already married he must observe complete abstinence. Failure to comply will lead to the death of the man by drowning, or he will lose all the wealth she had given him thereby making him extremely poor.⁵⁹

Ndogbo yosoi is a forest spirit among the Mende. He assumes the form of a short hairy man, and is often encountered by hunters. He prowls the forest both day and night. He leads hunters and lone travellers away into the deep forest, from where they may never return. If

found by a search party, they are usually disorientated, or dead. An incident took place in Pujehun District in the Southern Province, in the early 1980s, known as the *Ndogbo yosoi* uprising. This was a civil disturbance organised by inhabitants of the district, against the central government. It was during an election campaign, and through acts of terrorism and thuggery, they were being prevented from electing their own parliamentary representatives. The inhabitants lacked the arms and ammunition of the central government, so they resorted to spiritual forces. *Ndogbo yosoi* features very prominently as the spirit responsible for the disappearance of three truck loads of soldiers in the forest.⁶⁰ If *Ndogbo yosoi* falls in love with a woman he makes her very rich and popular. Fidelity must be observed, otherwise he withdraws all the wealth and popularity from her.⁶¹

Among the Limba there is *kamator*, a spirit that dwells in a stone shaped like a diamond. He does not assume human form. Possessors have to conceal the stone, and carry it about with them. He gives fame to politicians. He is also possessed by singers and dancers, and anyone seeking popularity in their trade. Wives in polygamous homes also possess him to gain control over their husbands. The spirit demands sacrifice ranging from a human being to an animal. Failure to comply with his regulations leads to gruesome road accidents, incurable ailments, insanity and death.⁶²

6.C *The Ancestors*

In the general run of things the ancestors, and not the Supreme Being or spirits, are the true exemplars of the spirit world. Not everyone qualifies to become an ancestor. Those who qualify must have passed through the various stages of life to reach respected adulthood, including the bearing of children. They must have died a good death, that is not a victim of suicide, or of a curse, nor a victim of any disease regarded as unclean, such as epilepsy. The deceased must have received proper burial, by the person or persons designated by right and duty to perform them. The post-burial ceremonies are also to be performed before the deceased can complete the journey from *katile* (place where he was buried), to *tieh* (world beyond).

Harry Sawyerr lists four overlapping categories of ancestors among the Mende, which are applicable to the other local ethnic groups:

- Direct genealogical ancestors of a particular family or group of families.

- The communal national heroes whose memories have come down in history as the defenders of their village, town, or tribe.
- Ancestors associated with professional expertise.
- Ancestors associated with a particular sacred spot.⁶³

Unlike the Supreme Being who lives up above in the sky, the ancestors are living down below. They are related to the community in a way that cannot be claimed for the Supreme Being. In describing the love and care the ancestors have for them, the Limba people say 'they bore us and they are us'.⁶⁴ The ancestors are very intimate to the people. They are still regarded and respected as heads and parts of the family and community to which they belonged while alive.⁶⁵ Part of the respect involves calling upon them to witness oath taking ceremonies. It is said that nobody uses their name, and then proceeds to speak untruth. As elders, they are considered and consulted on all important occasions, like weddings, overseas travel, and a new career.

The ancestors exert a very profound influence on the lives of the people. They are the official guardians of the social and moral fabric of the society, and so they become the focus of religious activity. Although dealing specifically with the Tallensi, Meyer Fortes makes a significant point which can be applied to Sierra Leone when he notes: 'The ancestors are the jealous guardians of the highest moral values, that is to say, the axiomatic values from which all ideal conduct is deemed to flow'.⁶⁶ In other words the ancestors ensure there is conformity to the requirements necessary for the fostering of good social relationship, thereby enhancing the solidarity of the community. The ancestors play an important role because the social structure demands it. Fortes makes this point when he says of the Tallensi of Ghana: 'Ancestry is the critical and irreducible determinant of the whole social structure'.⁶⁷ They preserve peace, harmony and stability. They can prevent accidents, disease and misfortunes. They aid economic pursuits, give children, land and wealth. There are no limits to the good things the ancestors can provide for the family and community. The rites and duties sanctioned by the ancestors both define and regulate social relations. The discharge of duties towards them is that which basically assures the individuals of protection against evil agencies like witches. Equally, and more importantly, the ancestors can turn their backs on them, or interfere in their affairs with negative consequences if neglected or if their norms and wishes are violated. Setiloane expresses the importance of the ancestors in this way:

Ah....yes....! It is true.
They are very present with us.....
The dead are not dead, they are ever near us;
Approving and disapproving all our actions,
They chide us when we go wrong,
Bless us and sustain us for good deeds done,
For kindness shown, and strangers made to feel at home.
They increase our store, and punish our pride.⁶⁸

Due to the belief in the importance of the ancestors, every effort is made to maintain a harmonious relationship with them. One very important way of maintaining this relationship is by offering sacrifices to them.

So important are the sacrifices offered to the ancestors that some examples must be considered in this section. For the Limba sacrifices to the ancestors take different forms, and are done at various levels: a household, a compound, a village, or a whole chiefdom. Whatever the form or the level, the sacrifices are a symbol of fellowship, a sign of continuity, and a recognition that the departed are still members of their families and community. Ignore them at your peril. Here three examples would help in demonstrating their importance.

A few years back Biriwa Chiefdom, the largest Limba Chiefdom, was plagued with a cholera epidemic, which threatened the very life of the community. In the midst of this problem, somebody dreamt that the heroes of the land were annoyed at being neglected; thus explaining the communal disaster. The heroes were known as *kurugba* (the warrior class), men who had fought on the tribe's behalf during the period of inter-tribal wars. They had brought honour and political dignity to the land.⁶⁹ The dream was told to the paramount chief, who called all the nine section chiefs of the Biriwa chiefdom. After consultation with the section chiefs, and the other elders, a communal sacrifice was agreed upon.

On the eve of the sacrifice a group of elders went to the centre of the town underneath a very large tree, to inform the *kurugba* of their intentions. The elders informed them of their intentions, and invited them to be present at the sacrifice. On the day of the sacrifice, nine cows, one each provided by each section, were led to the centre of Kamabia town, the Chiefdom headquarters of Biriwa. Everybody assembled and the sacrifice was conducted by the elders. The nine cows were slaughtered, and the blood allowed to flow. The meat was divided into three portions: one portion was used to prepare a meal for the *kurugba*, another

was distributed raw among the representatives of the nine sections, and the other was used in preparing a communal meal. When the meal for the *kurugba* was ready, the oldest elder present invoked the presence of the *kurugba*. He recited their names as far back as his memory could take him. The elder implored them to forgive them for the neglect. He pleaded with them to return to defending the land, and to give their children *Thebina Lima* ('Cool Hearts').⁷⁰ The food, along with some kola nuts and palm wine, were left at the centre of the town. After the sacrifice, the rest of the day was spent in feasting by the whole community.

This sacrifice, which was done at the chiefdom level, was communal in intent and effect; the *kurugba* were informed on the day before the sacrifice so that they were all present at the same spot, and the whole community of the living participated. The sacrifice, therefore, brought together the ancestors and the community at a common feast. Kola nuts and palm wine are symbols of hospitality. They become the means of cooling the anger of the ancestors, refreshing them enough to accept the hospitality of the living, and granting them their requests. The blood, which is symbolic of life, represents the link between the living and the dead. This sacrifice is an indication of the importance attached to dreams, as a vehicle of communication from the spiritual to the realm of humans. The dreams therefore are to be interpreted and their requirements met. This is also a reminder that the ancestors are alive, and can still influence the life of the living for good or ill. Therefore, they should not be neglected. The ancestral hut was not used for this sacrifice as it represented only the ancestors of this particular town, whereas the sacrifice was for all the *kurugba* of the whole chiefdom. The most senior elder led the sacrifice by virtue of his age. Age connotes wisdom and experience. He had lived long enough to see this and other rituals re-enacted over a period of time. He, therefore, knew the procedure.⁷¹

Another sacrifice is the communal ceremony held at village/town level after the harvesting of crops. This ceremony, known as *Borah* (literally 'crying for joy'), is held annually after the crop harvest in December. The ceremony observed in Kamabai town in December 1987 went like this: After the village head announced the date for the sacrifice, the villagers brought in their contributions of rice, palm oil, palm wine, and kola nuts. On the eve of the sacrifice, the elders went to the *kukankiro* (ancestral hut).⁷² This is a low mud brick structure with thatched roof, located at the entrance of the town. At the hut the ancestors were greeted with some palm wine, after which the oldest elder informed them that the people would be

visiting them in the morning. All those who would be participating in the sacrifice had the ritual obligation of abstaining from sexual intercourse prior to the sacrifice.

Very early in the morning a cow provided by the town chief was led to the hut where it was bound by four men. Everyone in the town assembled in front of the hut, and bared their feet. Four small calabashes, containing rice, palm wine, palm oil, and kola nuts, were carried to the entrance of the hut by four women. The oldest elder raised his hands, and there was silence. The men all crouched down, stretching out the right or both hands towards the cow. The women crouched at the back, facing away from the sacrifice.

The most senior elder led the invocation. He called on the dead using the term *betio be* (literally 'old ones'). He recounted their names and deeds, as far back as his memory took him. After the somewhat long recitation, he went on to say:

Betio be, we have come today; we your children. May we have 'cool hearts' (*thebina lima*).

You know that if a child wants cool heart from his parents, he must provide food for them when they become old.

It is for your sakes that we have come here today, to give you some food from the land you have given us.

Eat the food with joy, for it comes from us. May you give the town cool heart this year. Confuse and destroy our enemies.

Watch the land you have given us. May the harvest next season be good, so that we may come again next year to say thank you.

If I have forgotten anything, *betio be* do not be angry with me.

He ended by saying *lontha* ('let it be so'). After this the throat of the cow was cut open and the blood allowed to flow on the soil. He again said *lontha* and this was repeated by all present. A portion of meat, as well as the other food items in the calabashes, were left inside the hut. Everybody present returned to the chief's compound, where the rest of the day was spent in feasting, singing and dancing. The *yaliba* (praise singer), sang the praises of the ancestors. He told in songs the story of how they had defended the land during the era of intertribal wars. He recounted the various feats of bravery that enabled the Limba to defeat their neighbours and settle in the north. Other people started songs, and others replied in choruses. The singing and dancing continued until very late at night, when people started dispersing in small groups to their different homes.

There are several significant beliefs also to be obtained from this sacrifice. This sacrifice at the village level was also communal. The blood is symbolic of life, an indication of the land

being full of life and therefore fertile. The land belongs to the ancestors, and therefore the harmonious relationship between them and the people is to be maintained. Respect must be shown to the ancestors, therefore, the need for silence when the sacrifice commenced. There are anti-social elements existing, who would want to harm them, so the need for protection from the ancestors. As it was communal, even the children were not left out; so the tradition goes on.

Another sacrifice is at the family level. It is performed on behalf of a pregnant woman as part of a ritual of recognition. This sacrifice usually takes place within a month or two after confirmation from the woman that she is actually pregnant. On the day of the sacrifice, the immediate members of the family assemble in the house of the couple. The most senior member of the man's family present addresses the ancestors by their names. He begins with a statement like this:

Our fathers, you who have gone into the world of truth (*tieh*), but who still have powers over us, it is you we greet. You Pa (name of father), who was married to Ya (names of wives). And you brought forth (names of sons and daughters), who in turn were married to (names of spouses). And they brought forth (names of children).

He then continues;

We your children are very grateful to you for allowing (names of couple) to continue the family tree. May this child be protected from the evil that would want to attack it in the womb. May the mother also be protected by you. Protect her from the witches who will want to attack her, while she is carrying this child. If the child is ours, may the delivery be smooth, and may they both live. May the child grow up to continue the family tree, and give you your cold water.⁷³

He then offers the ancestors some kola nuts and rice flour. The rest is shared and eaten by all present. After the sacrifice the pregnant woman is instructed on the regulations and taboos she must observe throughout pregnancy. The observance of taboos and regulations is partly to protect the pregnant woman and the foetus from harmful influences, and partly because pregnancy makes her ritually 'impure'. Sometimes, apart from the family prescriptions, a pregnant woman visits a diviner for special prescriptions that can be different from the family's.

This sacrifice which is done on the family level, also shows the importance attached to the ancestors. They give children, they offer protection to the family, they are consulted on every important occasion. Showing of gratitude is a means of maintaining harmony. It also

shows that there is a link between those living, those dead, and those yet unborn. So the society forms a continuous link.⁷⁴ As the sacrifices demonstrate, whatever the form or the level, sacrifices to the ancestors are a symbol of fellowship, a sign of continuity and a recognition that the departed are still members of their human families and communities.

7. Conclusion of the chapter

From this chapter, it can be concluded that the traditional ideal of the *kabudu* concept is a fundamental outcome of traditional practices in Sierra Leone. This concept of the ideal community and community relationships is of fundamental value in the country. The individuals within the community are preoccupied with the interrelated spheres of economics, social morality and religion as a framework for the community life. The community relationship, be it on the family or village level, is the integrating factor, inculcating a strong feeling of oneness and solidarity. This in turn enables individuals to work together for the common good of all. This community is incomplete without the sacred dimension. The sacred is that which lends life and meaning to the vitality of the community. The collective participation in rituals, as exemplified by sacrifices to the ancestors, is what protects the community values which are otherwise threatened. These values are upheld by the ancestors, and by other social and religious sanctions. By the same token taboos and regulations emphasise collective morality as upheld by the community.

The members are closely knit together by social structures. The structures preserve and strengthen the established order, thereby enhancing the *kabudu's* well being. Whatever the level, community relationship encourages other-centredness as opposed to self-centredness; a condition very necessary for the fostering of community cohesion and well-being. This does not in any way signify that individual progress is stifled and individual achievements not recognised. It simply means that the rights of the community must take precedence over the rights of the individual. This ensures that individuals within the community are aware that they are corporate beings. This enables them to embrace virtues of kindness, hardwork, generosity, discipline, respect for age and life in general. Individual aspirations and goals must equally promote the well being of other individuals within the community. In other words the actions of an individual should not be a negation of the concept of *kabudu*. This explains why anti-social activities like witchcraft militates against the well-being not only of the victim, but also the community as a whole.

¹ Religion in this respect does not refer to the traditional religion in its original form, but rather to the belief in the supernatural world in relation to humanity, and to the role of spiritual beings like the ancestors, whether the religious subscription is purely in the traditional or found in Christianity and Islam.

² For a discussion on the cumulative frequency of religion see W.C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A new approach to the religious traditions of mankind*, New York: Meteor books, 1964, pp. 139-153.

³ The present crisis has reduced the population to under four million. Some areas are now densely populated whereas others are sparsely populated because of the movements caused by the war.

⁴ For more on the history of Sierra Leone see Fyfe, C. *A History of Sierra Leone*, London: OUP, 1962. Fyfe, C. *A Short History of Sierra Leone*, London: Longman, 1979. Alie, J.A.D. *A New History of Sierra Leone*, London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990.

⁵ Rice farming was already established on the coast of Sierra Leone and Liberia by the time of the first contact with Europeans in the 15th Century. The rice farmed was the African rice *oryza glaberima*. Asian rice was introduced by the Portuguese. See Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, London, Oxford, Portsmouth N.H.: James Currey & Heinemann, 1996, p.65.

⁶ Fyfe, C.M. *The History of Sierra Leone*, London & Lagos: Evans, 1981, p.134.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.7.

⁸ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, London: OUP, 1962, chapter 1.

⁹ Gorvie, M. *Our People of the Sierra Leone Protectorate*, London: Lutterworth, 1944.

¹⁰ Fyfe, C. *Sierra Leone Inheritance*, London: OUP, 1964, p.33.

¹¹ Greenberg, J.H. *The Languages of Africa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966, p.168.

¹² Fyfe, C.M. *Alimamy Suluku of Sierra Leone, 1820-1906*, London: Evans Brothers Ltd. 1979, on the dynamics of nineteenth century political leadership in Sierra Leone.

¹³ Fyfe, C. *Sierra Leone Inheritance*, chapter 1.

¹⁴ Finnegan, R. *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965, p.10.

¹⁵ *Background to Sierra Leone*, Freetown: Office of the President, State House, July 1980, pp. 215-239.

¹⁶ Wyse, A. *The Krio of Sierra Leone*, London: C. Hurst & Co. 1989, p. 5f. Fyfe, C. & E. Jones, (eds.), *Freetown: A Symposium*, Freetown: SLUP, 1968, p.2,6 &100f. Abraham, A. *Creoledom: A Study of the Development of Freetown Society*, London: OUP, 1963.

¹⁷ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.16.

¹⁸ *ibid.* p.16.

¹⁹ A. Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone*, p.14.

²⁰ This work is based on the Limba peoples in the Biriwa chiefdom, with the capital town of Kamabai. This is the largest chiefdom in terms of size and the most populous. See Finnegan, *Survey*, p.11, & Office of the President publication, *Background*, 1980, p. 100f.

²¹ Fyfe, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p. 56.

²² *ibid.* p.57. A diviner in Sierra Leone carries out a wide range of activities including divination, diagnosis and prescription of treatment for various ailments.

²³ This pattern is now changing because of the interference of the central government. Sometimes the latter impose their own candidate whose loyalty is to them.

²⁴ See Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.95 for a description of Madam Yoko, a very powerful female Mende chief in the late 19th Century. See also C. Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, p.475.

²⁵ The three phases of separation, transition and reincorporation were identified by Arnold van Gennep in his book on the rites of passage. See page 49 of this thesis.

²⁶ Alimamy Sheku II, was well spoken of by his subjects. He was noted for his humility in spite of the fact that he had studied in Britain. I had the opportunity of observing him for a few minutes while he was in session with six elders in his veranda on 29 December 1986.

²⁷ Finnegan, R. 'The traditional concept of chiefship among the Limba', A.T. Porter, (ed.) *Sierra Leone Studies New Series*, 17-20 June 1963 - January 1967, pp. 242-3.

²⁸ This is similar to the Mende chief who has no religious function, see H. Sawyerr, *God: Ancestor or Creator?*, London: Longman, 1970, p.91.

²⁹ Finnegan, R. *Survey*, pp. 22 & 41.

³⁰ Harris, W.T. & H. Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct*, Freetown & Oxford: SLUP & OUP, 1968, p.134.

³¹ Finnegan, R. 'The traditional concept of chiefship', p.29.

³² Sawyerr, H. in Parratt, J. (ed.) *The Practice of Presence*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans, 1996, p.117. See also page 1 of this thesis.

³³ Mbiti, J. *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Ibadan: Nairobi: Heinemann, 1971, p.108.

³⁴ Interviews conducted in several households in Kamabai, in December 1986.

³⁵ The word taboo goes beyond just the observance of rules of respect. It involves prohibitions or forbidden things. Failure to adhere can be disastrous not just for the individual, but also for the community.

³⁶ Westermann in his study of Africa and Christianity notes that 'the many taboos which a man has to observe are not to be regarded as things mechanical which do not touch the heart, but that the avoidance is a sacred law respected by the community. In breaking it, you offend a divine power'. Westermann, D. *Africa and Christianity*, London: Oxford University Press, 1937, p.97.

³⁷ While in Kamabai in December 1986, I was shown a youth who is thought to be insane, because he had sexual intercourse with his step-mother.

³⁸ Harris, W.T. & Sawyerr, H. *Springs*, chapter five, for a detailed description on sexual taboos and incestuous sex.

³⁹ Radcliffe-Browne, A.R. & D. Forde, R. *African Systems of Kinship*, London, 1950, p.72 notes: 'Incest disrupts the whole system of moral and religious sentiment on which the societal order rests'.

⁴⁰ The confession is important as to refuse to confess one's offence is to retain it. The bathing is symbolic of ritual cleansing, and the flogging beats away the evil hiding in the individual.

⁴¹ E.E. Evans-Pritchard notes this distinction among the Azande people in the Sudan, in his book *Witchcraft among the Azande*, London: OUP, 1937, part 1.

⁴² Informal conversation with Lucy, a member of the same household on 23 January 1991

⁴³ Finnegan, R., *Survey*, pp. 21, 41.

⁴⁴ I had an informal conversation on 20 August 1990, with Kai Sesay, a friend of mine with whom the boy was staying in Freetown. The incident was also confirmed by Mr Carew, who was working in Kamakwie where the incident happened in July 1987.

⁴⁵ Informal conversation with Alice and Serray Conteh in one household, in Kamabai on 28 December 1987.

⁴⁶ Informal conversation with Momoh Bangura in Freetown, and Musu, Yele, Serray and others in Kamabia, on 29 December 1986.

⁴⁷ This incident took place on the 26th December 1986. The youth killed was a primary school teacher. He was killed at the Bumban junction, close to Kamabai.

⁴⁸ When doing field work in December 1986, I lived in one such compound in Kamabai. The compound was comprised of four houses, and four household groups, made up of an elderly widowed mother, her widowed daughter and her children, a married son and his family, and an unmarried daughter.

⁴⁹ Harris, W.T. & Sawyerr, H. *Springs*, p.128 - 129. The origin of the *kenya* authority is derived from the Mende belief that while the physical part of a child, i.e. his flesh, blood and bones are derived from the father's semen, his spirit (*ngafei*) derives from his mother.

⁵⁰ Harris, W.T. & Sawyerr, H. *ibid.* p.94.

⁵¹ Taylor, J.V. *The Primal Vision; Christian Presence amid African religion*, London: SCM, 1963, p. 99f.

⁵² It is not the accepted norm for old people to live alone. When this happens the person is thought to be a witch, or a wicked individual.

⁵³ Jomo Kenyatta says of the Kikuyus of Kenya that the individuals were taught of 'what it is the community regards as all-important and indispensable in its progress and self maintenance'. See *Facing Mount Kenya*, London: Secker & Warburg Ltd, 1971, p. 98f.

⁵⁴ Sawyerr, H. 'What is African Theology?', in J. Parratt, (ed.), *The Practice of Presence: Shorter Writings of Harry Sawyerr*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996, p.96

⁵⁵ Finnegan, R. *Survey*, p.107.

⁵⁶ Harris, W.T. & Sawyerr, H. *Springs*, p.6.

⁵⁷ Interview with Sorie B. Bangura at FBC, Freetown on 10 June 1992.

⁵⁸ Sawyerr, H. 'The Supreme God and Spirits', *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, Vol. 3 (2), Freetown: Department of Theology, Fourah Bay College, 1961.

⁵⁹ Stories are commonly told of *mami wata* in Freetown. For example on 15 October 1995, one student, Musa Kamara, told me a story about Sosoliso, a petty trader living in the East end of Freetown. Within the space of a couple of months in 1994, his business expanded from petty street trading, to him owning a very large shop, and a car. By October 1995, after becoming a wealthy man, he was still single, leading to speculations that his wealth came from *mami wata*.

⁶⁰ Informal conversation with Hawa Mansaray, and two others on 12 April 1990. They had escaped from the disturbances and were now settled in Freetown.

⁶¹ Harris, W.T. & Sawyerr, H. *Springs*, p.45.

⁶² Interview with Momoh Bangura in Freetown, on 20 November 1987.

⁶³ Sawyerr, H. 'Ancestor Worship: The Mechanics', *The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, Vol. 6 (2), December 1964, p.26.

⁶⁴ Finnegan, R. *Survey*, p.109.

⁶⁵ It is their role as elders in the community that is emphasised in Sierra Leone, and not the intermediary aspect that Sawyerr or Mbiti notes. See Sawyerr, H. 'The Supreme God and Spirits', *The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, Vol. 3 (2), December 1961, p.15.

Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p.83.

⁶⁶ Fortes, M. *Oedipus and Job in West African Religion*, Cambridge: CUP, 1959, p.53

⁶⁷ *ibid.* p.66.

⁶⁸ Setiloane, G. 'How the traditional world-view persists in the Christianity of the Sotho-Tswana', in E.W. Fasholé-Luke et al (eds.), *Christianity in Independent Africa*, London: Rex Collings Ltd, 1978, p.407.

⁶⁹ See Cecil Fyle, *Alimamy Suluku of Sierra Leone 1820 - 1906*, London: Evans, 1979, p. 9ff, for a very good account of a *Kurugba*.

⁷⁰ *Thebina Lima*, signifies several things: that there should be no animosity, spite, and vengeful feelings among individuals in the community, that no one may be attacked by evil,

particularly witchcraft, that people would not suffer from ill-health and misfortunes. It signifies both physical, material and spiritual health and well-being.

⁷¹ Interview with Pa Mumuneh Conteh, village head in Kamabai, 28 December 1986.

⁷² In each of the villages I went to I observed that they all had their own sacred bushes at the end of the village and communal ancestral huts at the entrance of the village.

⁷³ Interview and informal conversations with the inhabitants of several households in Kamabai, including the household of Amadu where I was staying, and that of his sister Musu in December 1986.

⁷⁴ *ibid.* See also Harris, W.T. & H. Sawyerr, *Springs*, for similar sacrifices among the Mende.

Chapter Two

The Rites of Passage

1. *Definition on Rites of Passage*

In this chapter, rites of passage as significant ways through which the continuity and the values of *kabudu* are instilled and maintained will be discussed. Rites of passage as life cycle rituals are examined as important components in establishing and solidifying community relationships. The rituals to be analysed in this chapter, in the Sierra Leone context and particularly among the Limba, relate to birth, puberty, marriage and death. All the local ethnic groups in Sierra Leone observe various rituals associated with the different rites of passage; birth, puberty, marriage, and death.¹

The rites of passage create a feeling of oneness and solidarity, that is without reference to ethnicity and social status. They cut across ethnic barriers as participants in any given ritual could be drawn from more than one ethnic grouping. For instance, during the female puberty initiation rituals, the initiands could be drawn from the same locality, but not necessarily from the same ethnic group. When this happens relatives and friends of all the initiands converge at the same rituals, irrespective of ethnicity. The reason for this is that, even though there are local variations, the important components constituting the rites remain the same. Due to this uniformity, those who have participated in this common experience have a shared identity, enabling them to participate in any same sex initiation ceremony irrespective of where it is being held. It is also important to note that nowadays, because of the increase in scale of migration and interaction between different peoples, the various ethnic groups adopt different cultural elements including language, from each other. For example, during the Temne puberty ceremony called *bondo*, girls are taught songs that have a mixture of Temne and Mende words. A point of interest about migration and interaction is that it is thought that the *bondo* rituals actually started from the Mendes in the Southern and Eastern provinces, and then spread on to the other ethnic groups all over the country.²

Following Van Gennep,³ Victor Turner emphasises that life cycle rituals not only provide for and fulfil the task of inculcating societal rules and values to those who are to become its full-fledged members, but they also create a time of what he terms 'reflexivity'. Individuals, as well as society itself, may be moved to the edge of profound self-investigation and

exploration. Social categories are played with, inverted, and suspended; social borders are liquidated, crossed, and blurred; identity symbols are stripped away and affixed anew. There is a general sense of self-conscious questioning.⁴

Van Gennep points out that when the activities associated with the rites of passage are examined in terms of their order and content, there are three distinguishable phases. The first phase is the preliminal or separation phase, the second is the liminal or transition phase, and the third is the post liminal or incorporation phase.⁵ The three phases are to be found in any life-cycle ritual, but they are not developed to the same extent by all peoples or in every set of rituals. During the preliminal or rite of separation, the individual goes through a period of disassociation sometimes symbolic of death in which he departs from the community and his old status.

The transitional or liminal phase is the central or threshold phase. Victor Turner has extended liminality far beyond Van Gennep's original conception of an intermediate or marginal ritual phase, and has taken on new meaning as an autonomous category of people who are 'betwixt and between'.⁶ At this stage people are neither what they were nor what they will become. They are symbolically stripped of their former mode of being, ready to become something new. In the liminal stage social structures are broken down. This stage is a sacred period, cut off from the ordinary social world. Those involved in the ritual come together, with all social barriers removed, in what Turner calls 'Communitas'. This phase of liminality is regarded as dangerous, inauspicious and polluting to persons, objects and events, because as Mary Douglas argues, that which cannot be clearly defined in terms of traditional criteria of classification, or falls between classification boundaries, is almost everywhere regarded as 'polluting' and 'dangerous'.⁷ The individuals in this stage are therefore vulnerable, and are considered to be dangerous. The rites are meant to regulate and guard the individuals, as well as society as a whole, from any discomfort or danger that might occur during the passage.

The final phase is the post liminal or incorporation phase, in which the individual is accepted back into the community in his or her new status.

2.A *Child birth*

John Mbiti rightly notes that childbirth is not just a single event. It begins long before the actual birth and continues long thereafter: "Nature brings the child into the world, but society creates the child into a social being, a corporate person".⁸ The birth of a child begins with pregnancy; the first sign that a new member of the family and ethnic group is on the way. In the Limba community, a marriage is not fully recognised until the birth of a child.⁹ The first pregnancy, therefore, becomes the final seal of marriage, and the sign of complete integration of the woman into her husband's kinship circle. The worst thing to happen to a married woman is for her to remain childless. When this happens, regardless of what other qualities she might possess, her barrenness becomes a stigma.¹⁰ Even when the fault might lie with the husband, she receives the blame. She is considered to have failed in her duty of continuing the family tree started by the ancestors. When she dies there would be nobody of her own immediate blood to remember her, or to continue her own line of the family tree. This fact is a strong reason for the husband to divorce her or take another wife.

When a Limba woman becomes pregnant, she becomes very special, receiving special treatment from the community. She is not allowed to do hard work or carry heavy objects. People take care of her needs, particularly when it is the first pregnancy.¹¹ It must be noted that until the performance of a ritual of recognition around the eighth week of pregnancy, the news of the pregnancy must be kept a secret. The woman takes every precaution to prevent other people, particularly co-wives in a polygamous situation, from knowing about her condition. The ritual process, during which rice flour and kola nuts are offered to the ancestors, has already been described in chapter one of this paper. This ritual has a two-fold dimension: it is a thank offering to the ancestors for allowing the mother to continue the family tree, as children are a witness to the good will of the ancestors; it is also a ritual to implore the ancestors for pre- and post-natal protection for both the pregnant woman and the foetus. The protection is necessary because of the belief that as her pregnancy advances, the pregnant woman becomes particularly vulnerable to evil forces, including witches who are believed to be sustained by the fresh blood of infants, pre- or neo-natal. The woman is thus dangerously liminal. Her physical state is important for the perpetuation of the group and therefore socially desirable, yet she and her unborn child are potentially dangerous to that same group. Care must be taken therefore, lest the community suffer through the possible death of the woman or her child during child birth.¹²



A general practice throughout the country is for a pregnant woman to observe taboos and regulations, partly to protect her and the foetus from harmful influences, and partly because pregnancy makes her ritually 'unclean'. The taboos and regulations are those normally prescribed by her family and the community, but sometimes they include those prescribed by a diviner specifically for the individual. Some of the more general taboos and regulations include the following points: A pregnant woman must abstain from sex until the weaning of the child two to three years later, otherwise the child's development would be hampered. She is forbidden to eat certain foods, like those obtained from the forest and rivers believed to be inhabited by evil spirits and witches, because the child will become infested with a witch spirit. She must not stop half-way on a journey to return to her house, or the child will come half-way during labour and return. She should not go out at night unless it is absolutely necessary, and, when she does, she must carry a knife or stones for protection against evil spirits. Protective charms are worn to prevent miscarriage, for birth to proceed quickly, and for the good health of the child and mother after birth.

2.B *The actual birth*

Particularly if it is the first pregnancy, the woman returns to her mother's house for the delivery. The delivery either takes place at the mother's house or in the house of the *bamuimah* (traditional midwife). She delivers the baby either lying or squatting. Either way involves the use of a mat or leaves spread on the floor of the room. The floor is symbolic in that it forms a link with mother earth, and with the ancestors buried in her bosom. This means that nature as well as the ancestors are present at the birth of every Limba child.¹³

When the woman goes into labour a fishing net is placed by the *bamuimah* (midwife), on the floor of the room's entrance. The fishing net stays in this position, while the mother and child stay in the room until the umbilical cord drops off. This period of seclusion symbolises death, and separation from society. The fishing net is a silent but dramatic reminder that entrance to the room is prohibited to all males, and to any female not closely connected with the woman. It is also believed that the net catches the pain and any evil spells that would prolong the delivery. The umbilical cord is a symbol of the child's attachment to the mother, and to the state of inactivity. Until it drops off it is a reminder that the child is not completely dead to life in the womb. Therefore, the need exists for seclusion to prevent

danger and pollution emanating from the baby to the community, as well as to prevent any one with evil intent causing its death by touching the cord.¹⁴

The placenta is an object of special treatment among the various ethnic groups in the country. Among the Limba, after birth the *huluku* (placenta) is given to the wife's relatives for burial. A hole is dug underneath a banana tree by the wife's mother or any other old female relative at the house of the wife's mother. The *huluku* (placenta) is placed in a circle and the end which connected the child to the mother is placed upright. It is believed that if this end is buried in a downward position it will cause barrenness. The downward position is symbolic of turning the womb upside down. The disposal of the placenta indicates that the child has died to the state of being alone in the mother's womb, and will ritually arise to life in the family and community during the naming ceremony. It is significant to note that the burial of the placenta has to be carried out by the woman's relatives, as the husband's own family is not responsible for ensuring that she is fertile. If she loses her fertility it is her family who must refund the bride-price and assume responsibility for her problem.

Difficult labour at times is attributed to witchcraft with the woman herself being either a witch caught by a swear or the victim. But most of the time it is attributed to adultery on the part of the woman. In the case of the latter, the husband is called into the labour room for the wife to confess her unfaithfulness and beg his forgiveness. He performs a special ceremony. On entering the room he is given a small calabash full of water. Holding it in both hands he accepts her apology. He then pours water on her face and belly, before leaving the room. The woman is expected to deliver after this without any further difficulty. If she refuses to confess her crime she might even die. The following actual incident demonstrates this. A woman named Hawa (not her real name) died during child birth, in one of the Limba communities in Freetown. Hawa already had eight children and was expecting her ninth. When she went into labour she was taken to the house of a midwife. It was a very difficult and prolonged labour. Instead of taking her to the hospital, she was urged to confess that she had committed adultery, and to name the culprit. She kept on insisting her innocence to the midwife and the other women present. She bled to death without receiving any medical attention. Medical doctors later on attributed her death to anaemia, and other complications caused by having so many closely spaced pregnancies. Despite the medical evidence the husband refused to bury Hawa, as he was convinced that the doctors were wrong. He stated emphatically that Hawa had been unfaithful. Otherwise how was he to account for the fact

that she had had eight children without any difficulties? She had to be buried by her relatives which is a disgrace for any married woman.¹⁵

The Limba, like other ethnic groups in the country, believe that twins possess supernatural powers, because ordinarily a pregnant woman should give birth to one child. When she gives birth to more than one, it is an extraordinary occurrence, and therefore supernatural.¹⁶ When a woman gives birth to twins on the second or third day they are placed in a *kubonka* (winnowing fan), and carried to the marketplace by some women, accompanied by a crowd of women and children singing songs of praise to the twins.¹⁷ One such song goes:

Sento nabah son sonah ukaneh dow x2
Sinnah nabah son sonah ukaneh dow x2
Sento is the offender, that is not so at all x2
Sinnah is the offender, that is not so at all x2

A view representative of many of my informants is that the song exposes the twins to the fact that they should not use their supernatural powers to harm the family or community. As the crowd moves from one market stall to another, gifts, especially money, are placed in the winnowing fan. The gifts are meant as a sign of welcome to the twins. This special treatment is necessary to let the twins know they are welcome to stay in the community, instead of continuing their journey. However, even as they are made welcome they should grow up without causing any trouble for the community. The *kubonka* (winnowing fan) is symbolic of blowing away and sifting out the evil powers inherent in the twins. There are also rituals performed when a child is born with *badada* (dreadlocks), or when a woman keeps having still-births or losing her babies after birth. These rituals have the intent of warding off evil spirits and witches, and offering future protection to the family and the community.¹⁸

2.C Naming ceremony

Prior to the naming ceremony, the child is regarded as a “stranger” that could return from where it came at any time. During the naming ceremony the child becomes individualised. The ceremony also becomes the rite of incorporation of the child into the family and the community. It is significant to note that at the naming ceremony, the past, the present and the future meet. The child who is the symbol of the continuity and future of the family and community is publicly accepted and admitted into that same family and community.

The naming ceremony usually takes place on the eighth day after birth, when the umbilical cord has fallen off the baby. Until the cord falls off, the child is still symbolically attached to the mother, and not yet ready for incorporation into the family and community.¹⁹ Very early in the morning the fishing net is removed from the room's entrance. The mother and baby are bathed with medicinal water by the *bamuimah* (midwife) or an old woman from the wife's family.²⁰ After getting dressed they are taken outside into the compound. The seclusion, which symbolised death and separation from society, is now over. The mother and child are resurrected and integrated into the community. When all have gathered for the ceremony, including relatives from both sides of the family, neighbours, and other members of the community both far and near, the child's head is shaved. This is symbolic of the old having been taken away to make way for the new. An offering of rice flour and kola nuts are made to the ancestors by an old man from the father's side. This is because Limba society is patrilineal.

After this an old woman from the husband's family chews and spits a bit of kola nut into the child's mouth, symbolising long life and prosperity. She also chews and spits alligator pepper (a pod with numerous tiny seeds that is very hot, very spicy), into the baby's mouth so that the baby would later face the world with bravery and courage. Then the child's name is publicly announced. The names have various meanings and are an important component of the personality acquired by the child. Some children are given names of ancestors who have appeared in a dream to request this, or those they resemble, or those the parents hope the child will emulate as it grows older. Some are given names to mark the day they were born, for instance, a female born on Monday is called Tenneh, the male counterpart is Yaraba. Some names indicate the circumstance or occasion of the child's birth: for instance, Paeyoh means a child whose mother dies during its birth. Thuyah means a child born feet first. Sarrah means the first born male and the female counterpart is Serah.²¹

2.D Weaning

Weaning of a child usually takes place two to three years after birth. If the wife was staying with her parents (as is usually the case with the first birth), the husband returns to collect the wife and child taking with him gifts for the wife's parents. The gifts are a token of appreciation to them for caring for both mother and child. At the husband's house the wife must take a ritual bath before resuming normal sexual activities. Before the ritual bath which

symbolises weaning the child off breast milk, it is forbidden for her to have sexual relations. Abstinence is essential as the wife is still considered to be ritually unclean, and therefore could be dangerous. Contact with her would render the husband also unclean. Also it is believed that the seminal fluid would travel into the mother's breast, and this, when fed to the child, would lead to a condition known as *banfa*, or *hati uputan doh* (that is the hindering of the child's development or even its death). It is during the ritual bath that the state of impurity and inactivity is washed away, thereby symbolising the fact that she is no longer unclean. She can now resume normal sexual activities, since she is now a new person, ready for another child to enter her womb.²²

After weaning, the education and socialisation of the child continues. Since the child belongs not just to the parents but to the community, everyone is free to seek its welfare. Harry Sawyerr notes: 'The individual is not a separate entity but a facet of the community'.²³ As the child accepts food and other articles from anyone in the community, it must be protected from those who would want to harm him. So the child is adorned with protective charms and sometimes marks of protection are made by a diviner, who puts medicine into the wounds. The child is introduced to *Kanu Masala* (God). The child participates in prayers offered to *kanu* by the family. The child sees and participates in rituals to *betio be or fureni* (the ancestors), such as sacrifices offered to them.

As part of the socialisation and educational process, the child is taught good manners. For instance, a child should not eat with elders, but when this happens, the child should use his hands, and not a spoon, and the child must not eat fish or meat unless given. At about the age of six, skills are beginning to be imparted to children. Parents use the boys as farm guards. Platforms are erected for them in the middle of farms and they assist in driving out rodents and birds from the farms. At about ten, a boy is enrolled in a *kuneh* (farming club). These clubs are made of boys, youths and elders who come together to assist one another in the farms during the planting and harvest seasons. They assist with carpentry by handing tools over to the carpenters. They help hunters set traps. The girls would start accompanying women to the market, help to tend the fire, wash dishes, and assist in other domestic chores. This informal education continues until puberty when education becomes more formal during the puberty initiation rituals.

3.A *Puberty rites*

One of the most important and elaborate of the rites of passage takes place during puberty when youths are initiated into adulthood. Puberty initiation rituals produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the initiates. The initiation rites are important as a means of confirming and perpetuating culture and tradition within the community:

They are ritual and dramatic expressions of the supreme power and value upon the minds of each generation, and they are at the same time an extremely efficient means of transmitting tribal lore, of insuring continuity in tradition and of maintaining tribal cohesion.²⁴

It is compulsory for every Limba youth to undergo initiation into one of the secret societies responsible for the puberty initiation. After initiation they receive the community's approval and respect as adult members. The time of initiation is most often determined by the physiological development of the would be initiates. This is usually between the ages of eleven to sixteen.

3.B *Origins*

The secret societies involved in the transformation from puberty to adulthood are the preliminary *burray* and *gbangbani* for boys, and the *bondo* for girls. They are secret in the sense that the rites are restricted to a particular sex and age group. In an interview conducted in Kamabai on 28 December 1986, a leading elder in the village Pa Mumuneh Conteh, told me that the male society originated long ago, out of the need to have a common factor that would be a symbol of unity binding the various ethnic factions together, transcending family and community solidarity. This he said was necessary as the Limba were not originally from Sierra Leone; they came in small groups from the Futa Jalon region, and settled in different communities in the North. There was always the tendency for the different groups to regard themselves as separate entities, under their particular leaders. In moments of crisis, one variation would join forces with other neighbouring ethnic groups to fight against another Limba group.

Another reason that necessitated the founding of the society was the need for a training ground that would mould them, for outward roles, and also mould their moral and mental dispositions in the process. These aims of the founding fathers have been achieved to such

an extent that even today the members of all the subgroups say that 'The Limba people are all one'.²⁵

On 29 December 1986, an old lady in Kamabai, informed me that the *bondo* society was formed as a solution to the problem of promiscuity in the olden days. Society was mostly polygamous. This meant that co-wives had to wait for a few days to sleep with the husband, as they took it in turns. The dissatisfied wives were going outside of their homes to derive sexual pleasure and satisfaction. The old women became so disgusted with this behaviour that they decided something must be done. It happened that one of them had a dream, in which she claimed an ancestor had appeared to her. She was told that clitoridectomy was to be performed on all girls once they reach puberty and before marriage. She was told that once the operation was performed the girls' sexual excitability would be suppressed. They would then become 'clean' and fit in 'safely' into the social structure, with wives considering sex as a sacred duty for procreation, and the happiness of their husbands, and not for their own pleasure or satisfaction.²⁶

The next morning she called a meeting of all the old women in the community, and told them her dream. They decided to form a society to carry out this purpose. They also agreed on the rituals to accompany the operation, which had to be secret otherwise the girls might refuse to be operated on. Some of the aims they hoped the society would achieve included the preservation of chastity, the prevention of promiscuity and the enhancement of fertility. This, the old lady informed me, is how the *bondo* society started among the Limba.²⁷

3.C *The Burray society*

The preliminary and basic stage of the *gbanghani* is the *burray* society. The ceremony for the *burray* society is held annually in the large towns and every two years in the villages. It usually takes place in the dry season after the harvesting of crops, when there is plenty of food. This is usually between December and February, when also there is the harmattan season with its cold dry winds, which facilitate the rapid healing of wounds. As the time for the initiation approaches, the chief or village head, as well as the elders, meet to decide upon the date the ceremony is to be held. When the date is decided upon, the elders led by the blacksmith, assemble in the middle of the town/village to offer *saraka* (sacrifice), to the founding fathers to ensure the ceremony would be successful.

During the preparatory stages of between two to four weeks, the parents of an intending candidate consult a diviner to see what they need to do to protect their child from harm, particularly witchcraft. The father of the would-be candidate binds poka sticks, obtained from the bamboo plant, with a straw. He hangs the bundle at the entrance of his house. The poka sticks represent the total number of days pending until the initiation from the day the date of the ceremony is announced. It is also a sign for everyone to know that there is an intending candidate in the particular household. During this period the would-be candidates are treated with respect, and do very little work. They are given kola nuts by their parents, as gifts to be given to the many people that are to be invited. The candidates move about, usually in groups, visiting relatives and friends in the immediate locality, but also moving out to other villages and towns, inviting them to the ceremony.

Just before the initiation, the *soma* (senior boys already initiated), who act as patrons for each candidate throughout the ceremony, go out to collect the following items:

bando (the carcass of a baboon);

sargbeh (a pair of long trousers, sewn from dyed country cloth);

dun dun (a large long skin drum);

n'kalay (a hollow wooden gong);

dissa (three head ties and the top decoration).²⁸

Most of the items collected are used for dancing the *gbondokalie* (the pre-initiation dance), on the eve of initiation. On the eve known as *sorkoh*, a big vigil is held in the town/village. In the evening everybody assembles at the town/village centre. A circle is formed with the candidates in the centre. *Hudurulay*, the feet washing ceremony, is performed by the *somas*, after which they carry the candidates into the bush to get prepared for the *gbondokalie*. In the bush the candidates are adorned with the costume for dancing which comprises of the three head ties and the top decoration. The *bando* is carried on the back. The boys are again carried from the bush by their *somas* into the town/village centre. At the centre, the drum accompanied by the *n'kalay* is played. The boys are led by an elder into the middle of the circle where they dance the *gbondokalie*. The songs sung for this refer to departure, loss, and change. After the *gbondokalie* dance, everyone is free to participate in the rest of the dancing and singing which goes on all night. The candidates are not allowed to sleep.²⁹

In the morning the boys are led from the town/village centre into the *gbonkon* (this is a thatched enclosure in a secluded forest area used for initiation), in a single file. The candidate in the lead is given a goat to carry. On reaching the path leading to the forest the goat is strangled and the blood allowed to flow across the path. The master of ceremonies, the blacksmith, recites some incantations after which each candidate must pass over the blood. At this point non - initiates must return home, while the candidates proceed to the *gbonkon*.

Nearby the *gbonkon*, where they will stay, the initiands sit in a row, with legs wide opened gazing into the sky. The circumciser, usually chosen for his swiftness and expertise, circumcises the row of boys with a knife. The blood is then allowed to flow. During the operation the boys are watched by the men to make sure they are not cowards. Even though it is a very painful operation, fear must be concealed. They should not flinch or cry out in pain. After the operation some of the men go back to the town/village to announce that another set of men has been born. The new initiates put on the *sargbeh* (dyed trousers), and stay in the enclosed area of the forest for approximately two to three weeks, until their wounds heal up. During this period of seclusion they are taken care of by the *somas*. At night the *somas* take it in turns to watch the sleeping initiates' position; they should lie on their backs so that no damage is done to their wounds. The wounds are cleaned every day with hot herbal water, during which healing incantations are pronounced.

In the bush they acquire knowledge about their spiritual heritage which includes the role of the ancestors as the founding fathers of the society. They are taught knowledge related to the secrets of the forest; the skills in hunting, the different trees and their various uses. The new initiands learn to play two kinds of wooden gongs associated with *gbangbani*. One is a wood slit gong approximately four feet long, usually played with a simple stick. There is also a smaller wood gong.³⁰ They also hear the sound of the sacred wood horn of the *gbangbani*, but they are not yet permitted to see it. They are also taught secret signs and pass words not known to the uninitiated. Until the wounds heal they should not be seen by the opposite sex, so whenever they go out for short walks in the forest, somebody goes ahead to warn any approaching member of the opposite sex to take a different route.

After the healing of wounds there is the *yawuray* ceremony. This is held to assure mothers and the rest of the community that the initiates are still alive. During this ceremony the

initiates clothe themselves in black gowns, a black hat with beads as decoration, and a horn. The boys called *gbaku* (unclean) at this stage, move to the town/village and settle at the entrance. People rush to see them but have nothing to do with them as they are still ritually unclean. From the town/village, they move downstream where they are ritually bathed before returning to the bush through paths that would keep them away from the town/village.

A few days later there is the closing ceremony. In the morning before the ritual bath, the initiates take an oath of secrecy vowing that they will not divulge the secrets of the society to the women, children and uninitiated. Medicine is rubbed over their body, and they are led to a river to bathe. The boys once dressed are led to the town/village centre by the blacksmith. At the centre they sit on mats. Relatives and friends give them *yonseh* (gifts). After this a visit is made to the chief's compound. The rest of the day is spent in feasting and dancing by the whole community. The next couple of days are spent in visitation by the initiates. Wherever they go the initiates are given food and gifts. After this they resume their normal living in the community, not as adults but as senior boys. They are no longer children so they must not eat, sleep, or play with the uninitiated children. A few weeks to a year after entering *burray* the transformation into adulthood is completed with the *gbangbani* initiation.³¹

3.D *The Gbangbani society*

The *gbangbani* is the highest secret society among the Limba. For a Limba man to be recognised as a full fledged member of the community, he must be a *gbangbani* initiate. For him to hold any form of religious, political or social power, he must be a member of the *gbangbani*. On the eve of the *gbangbani* initiation the town/village, with the permission of the chief, is closed for the night. The town crier announces that all strangers, women, children and uninitiated are to stay indoors that night, or risk been swallowed by the *gbangbani* devil (a masked figure representing the ancestors). The *gbangbani* devil dances all night while the initiates are taken to the *gbangbani* society enclosure in the forest. The sound coming from the instruments being played by the men is representative of the spirit of the founding fathers. This sound can be very eerie. Not only are doors and windows kept firmly locked, but women and children crouch on the floor in complete darkness too afraid to move or sleep.³²

In the bush the initiates see for the first time the two core elements of the *gbangbani*; the fibre masked figure, and the sacred wood horn which the masked figure dances to. The next day a ceremony is performed during which scarification is done on the back. It is said that the scars on the backs are made by the devil as he swallows and spits each candidate out, thereby completing the transformation into adulthood. The heads of the initiates are shaven, and they are given new names. On coming out of the sacred bush the initiates are now recognised as full adults in the community. They are now eligible to get married, have children and enjoy certain rights and privileges reserved solely for the adults in the community.

3.E *The Bondo society*

The *bondo* society has been in existence in the country since 1668.³³ As already mentioned it is practised by virtually all the local ethnic groups, with the main exception being the Christian Krios in the Western Area of Freetown. Some among the Christian Krios practice it if they are of a mixed parentage, or are in an inter-ethnic marriage. Among the Limba the *bondo* initiation usually take place in the dry season.³⁴ As the period approaches, mothers intending their daughters to be initiated inform the *barigba* (head of the particular *bondo* bush), of their intentions. The *barigba* performs the tossing of kola nut ceremony. She tosses kola nuts on behalf of each intending candidate and consults with the ancestors of the particular bush to see whether she will accept the girl. If she accepts the particular candidate, she instructs the mother on the items she must collect. They include one white and two mixed coloured lappas, money and a mat. At times the *barigba* rejects an intending candidate if after consultation it is revealed to her that the girl or her mother is a witch. If a witch is initiated, disaster would befall the particular *bondo* bush. Initiates would die from the knife of the *barigba*, and she would lose her popularity. The initiated witch would herself either bleed to death, or face death when swallowed by *ya pon* (*bondo* snake). If a girl or her mother are identified as witches, they must confess, and cleansing rites are to be performed by the diviner responsible for this. The girl then must wait for the next initiation season. For the same reason of preventing ill-luck entering a particular *bondo* bush, the *barigba*, has to prepare herself ritually, by abstaining from sex on the eve of the operation. She also takes precaution to ensure that none of the candidates has been planted in her midst by a rival *barigba* who might be jealous enough to want her to lose her popularity.³⁵

Prior to the initiation ceremony mothers consult with diviners to see what should be done to prevent harm befalling their children while in the bush. The girls go out in groups to inform relatives and friends, both far and near of the coming event. On the eve of initiation each girl's hair is plaited in a special style (*kabasa*). In the evening the *sangboni* (*bondo* drum), slung over the shoulder of one of the *sowe* (*bondo* elders), begins to beat. A crowd of women accompanies the drummer, singing and clapping their hands. The crowd following the drummer moves from one compound to another. They stop for awhile in each compound where there is a candidate for initiation to collect the girl and move on to the next. When the collection is over, the girls dance a little in the town/village centre before being led to the *ruyarma* (the *bondo* bush which is a round enclosure made of straw mats).

In the bush a vigil (*sorkoh*) is held all night. There is heavy drumming, singing, and clapping of hands. The initiands dance the *a hure ma loro* (pre-initiation dance). Everybody in the bush stays awake. Very early in the morning the girls organs are bathed with very cold water, to help in numbing them. The *barigba* who is very experienced, examines the girls to see if they are virgins. Sometimes the examination involves the tossing of kola nuts on the ground to ascertain whether a girl whose hymen is not intact is still a virgin.³⁶ If the two halves of the kola nut turn in the same way the girl is pronounced a virgin; if the two halves turn in the opposite way then the girl is not a virgin. Outside of the enclosure the girls all lie down in a row in a knee high and legs apart position. The *barigba* nips off part of the clitoris with a knife, and the blood is allowed to flow. The girls are expected to endure the pain of the operation very bravely, just as they would endure the pains of child birth later on. The operation is performed by the *barigba* in the presence of the women who sing and clap their hands very loudly to drown the cries of the initiates. After the operation the virgins are given special privileges and the lack of virtue in others made known. Sometimes those who are not virgins are flogged, and made to feel they have let down the community. The parents also feel the stigma of the violation of the community norm on sexual morality by the daughter. Beads are tied around the waist and neck of the girls and they tie the mixed coloured lappas.

After the operation the *barigba* returns to her home. The girls are cared for by their *semas* (an initiated older sister or relative), who stays with her throughout her time in the bush. The *semas* take care of their wounds; they feed and bathe them every day until the wounds heal.

While in the bush it is regarded as a privilege for those who have intentions of becoming future husbands of the initiates to help pay for the initiation. The initiates eat food collectively regardless of source. During the period of seclusion while the wounds are healing, the girls are not to be seen by men; they move about only in the *bondo* bush. The wounds are cleaned each day with herbal water by their *semas*. If, as it sometimes happens, any of the initiates suffer from heavy bleeding, they are not allowed to take part in activities organised. They have to rest until their wounds heal. In the bush they are taught social and moral codes of behaviour so that on coming out they will be able to take their place in the society as wives, mothers and women of repute.

When all the wounds heal up, the *semas* report to the *barigba*, who comes and performs the *lora thenko* (hand washing ceremony). This ceremony takes place half way through the completion of the whole ritual. For the ceremony the *barigba* collects some leaves, which she pounds and soaks in a large container for washing the initiates. She scrapes the body of each initiate in turn with a small knife, and the liquid is sprinkled on her. The scraping signifies the removal of ill-luck and pollution from the initiates. Specially prepared rice flour is placed in a winnowing fan. After the *lora thenko*, the initiates kneel around the winnowing fan. The *barigba* goes to each in turn. She asks them how many children they want to have. She moulds the rice flour into balls, and gives each initiate the corresponding number of balls for the number of children they desire. After this ceremony, the girls visit various homes, as a sign of assurance that all is well.³⁷ They return to the bush for a period of three days *kantha* (confinement) before the *nuta nuta* (coming out) ceremony.

On the eve of the coming out the *barigba* performs a final ceremony. During this performance the *bondo* spirit represented by *ya pon* (a big snake), symbolically swallows the initiates and spits them out again. Women loot farms and gardens to prepare a ritual meal eaten by all present in the bush. Some of the prepared food is offered to the founders as a thank-offering for a successful completion of the ritual. In the morning the girls are rubbed with *hiro* (white clay). They swear an oath of secrecy and are then led to the stream. In the lead of the procession is the *barigba*, followed by the woman carrying the snake in a white calabash; they are followed by the *bondo* masked figure (*suwi*), and the initiates in a single file holding on to the lappa of the person in front. At the stream they are ritually bathed and purified from all childhood sexual inactivity. They are dressed in their fineries and taken amidst drumming and dancing to the town/village centre. At the centre they are welcomed

by all. Feasting and dancing goes on until very late. During this time some men do propose to some of the girls and begin marriage negotiations with their parents. Some of the girls or their parents reject the offer of marriages if they would prefer the girls to continue with their schooling, or if they would rather have another suitor. After the coming out, the girls are recognised as adults; they are no longer to play, eat or sleep with uninitiated children. For a whole week after their coming out, the girls move about on visitations, receiving gifts of food and money. After this they are free to marry or continue with their schooling.

3.F Interpretation

The puberty initiation rites have many symbolic meanings within the traditional religious context. The whole ceremony is located in a sacred context. Sacrifices before the ceremony have the effect of bringing the ancestors to take part in the ceremony of the living. Then every important stage in the entire initiation is further located in the ancestors' presence by some rituals. The final ceremony is also a sacred act. The society bush is sacred because the founder of the particular bush lies buried in its soil, still taking an active part in the rituals. The elders are actively involved in the societies since by virtue of their age, they are nearer to the ancestors. Age also connotes wisdom, and the wise know how to deal with the sacred. The old people know the procedures for the rituals as they have lived long enough to see it being re-enacted over a period of time. The rites thus support and make sacred the structure of authority in the community. This in turn helps in conserving order. The rites ensure that the living elders accept and support the authority of the deceased elders. The youths also accept and support the authority of the living elders. Turner notes this fact when he views initiation as an experience that reinforces the normal social structures. People return to their secular life, confirmed in the belief that the norms, values and structures in their community are to be maintained.³⁸

The initiation is a re-enactment of the sacred history. The whole process is a repetition of the first ceremony performed by the founders. The societies link the initiates directly to the founders of the societies and to the traditions of their ancestors. The spirits of the founders are called upon, their consent is sought before initiation can take place. Sacrifices are offered to them, songs are sung in praise of them, and the line of continuity between those living and those dead are further enhanced.

The blacksmith plays the leading role in the male society as he controls the iron and the most powerful swear objects in the community. Both the iron and objects are said to be in understanding with thunder, also said to be of iron. The thunder and the smith's iron are held to be in unity, and to have an understanding of each other. The blacksmith is thus very powerful and the most feared among the Limba. As there is an understanding between him and nature, he takes the leading role; the iron used in circumcising belongs to his class, and the instruments used in dancing the *gbangbani* are created by him.

The carcass of the baboon is symbolic of the strength and bravery the youths are expected to carry with them into adult life as warriors, farmers and men of repute. The long dyed trousers conceal the blood. Goats feature in Sierra Leone as sacrifice in the general idea of substitution of life of animal for life of man. In this context it is sacrificed in exchange for the blood of the initiates, who might become victims to witches wanting to use their blood for evil. Sacrifices are offered to the ancestors during initiation to prevent witches and other evil agents striking out against the initiates. The medicine rubbed before the ritual bath is also for this reason. The beads and white clay used for the girls are symbols of fertility.

The three head ties which are symbols of femininity, as well as the black gowns worn by the boys for the *yawuray* ceremony, represent what Victor Turner terms the "liminal personae", one who is neither this nor that, neither here nor there, but rather betwixt and between.³⁹ As liminal personae the initiates are sacred and even dangerous. They have to be made ritually clean before re-entering the community. In the same vein the clitoris is a rudiment of maleness and a threat to male domination. Until it is removed the individual is in a state of sexual ambiguity, and therefore liminal. It has to be removed for the individual to fit in 'safely' and 'purely' into the community.

The rites enhance the concept of *kabudu*. There is a deep feeling of oneness and solidarity experienced by those who go through the same initiation rites. This is without reference to ethnicity and social status. The rites reinforce social values, maintain social stability and promote *kabudu* identity and solidarity. Through the repetition and reactualisation of the traditional rites the entire practising community is regenerated. The fact that the candidates are from different families also strengthens community solidarity and corporateness.

Men and women are not simply born, but made what they are through rituals. Through initiation the boys and girls are made into men and women. Through initiation sexual techniques and roles are revealed. Before this, the initiates are children and are expected to be virgins. The ceremonies are a symbolic initiation into fertility, so the ritual washing carries the idea of purification from the state of unproductive life and a preparation for adult life and parenthood.

Circumcision and clitoridectomy are the marks that distinguish the initiated from the uninitiated. These marks are the seal of permanent incorporation into the practising community. The operation, as well as some of the rigours undergone during the initiation period, constitutes very real physical pain, yet the knowledge that through this process one becomes a real man or woman makes the endurance of pain worthwhile. The pain is a preparation for the endurance of physical and emotional pain to be encountered in life in Africa. The fact that the initiates must not sleep on the night of initiation is also a victory over physical fatigue, and a demonstration of will and spiritual strength.

The continuity between those living, those dead, and those yet unborn is further enhanced by the shedding of blood. Those dead had shed their blood in this way; those yet unborn would do the same in their turn, so those yet living make for continuity. Also through the shedding of blood the initiates are bonded mystically to mother earth and to the ancestors who are symbolically living in the ground. The blood is also symbolic of life and fertility as life springs from blood.

The gifts given to all the initiates is also symbolic of the fact that by virtue of being initiated together they are all brothers or sisters. The gifts are also a sign of independence. The young people can now own and inherit property. They are also tokens of welcome into the full community, with the individual receiving full acceptance and respect by the community. The visitations by the new initiates serve as an incentive for the uninitiated; it has a psychological effect on the uninitiated creating the desire to want to become initiated.

4.A *Marriage*

For most of the ethnic groups in Sierra Leone marriage is considered to be not just a union of two people, but of the respective families and community as a whole. Most of the time the

individuals, but more importantly their family backgrounds, as well as community relationships are placed under critical scrutiny before marriage agreements are reached. This scrutiny is very important. There have been instances when this scrutiny was overlooked with disastrous consequences. Sometimes there might be ill-luck or other 'bad blood', like witchcraft in the family. Nobody would want to knowingly become a member of such a family through marriage. Sometimes one of the individuals concerned might belong to a family that has a curse on them, and this might affect the individual and the marital union later on in life. For example, there is a family in Freetown called the Monro family (not their real name). The mother of this family was said to have been involved in some diamond theft in the Eastern province in the 1960s. A curse was placed on her and her generation, even those yet unborn, by the rightful owner of the diamond. She and her husband are now dead, but her children continue to bear the consequences of her action. She had three sons and a daughter. The daughter and a brother, both in their fifties were killed in March 1995, when fire gutted the house they were living in. The two surviving brothers are suffering from mental illnesses, and so was the daughter of one of the brothers, who died in November 1987. The curse will continue to visit that family from one generation to the next. Even to get it revoked now, they say, is almost impossible as the person who had actually invoked it in the first place is long since dead.⁴⁰ This example explains the need for the scrutiny, which is usually carried out by the old people, whose findings the young must accept.

Among the Limba, initiation into the puberty secret societies is an important prerequisite for marriage. It is a ritual sanctification and preparation for marriage. Sex before this makes one ritually unclean. Marriage is considered to be a religious obligation in the sense that marriage and procreation are in unity.⁴¹ Biologically both husband and wife are reproduced in their children, thus perpetuating the chain of humanity. The ancestors are at times reincarnated in part, in their descendants. Also the birth of children in marriage means that there would be someone to remember the parents after physical death, thereby ensuring the link with the ancestors remains unbroken. Polygamy among the Limba is very common, as the logic goes: if a Limba man has many wives, he would have many children and dependants. He would thus be in a position to increase his financial exploits, and this in turn would boost his social and economic status. Mbiti puts it this way: 'The more we are, the bigger I am'.⁴²

4.B *Choice of partner*

The most popular way of choosing a partner is by arrangement. This can take various forms: one way is through infant betrothal, in which a man asks a pregnant woman, if she gives birth to a daughter, for the child to become his wife. If the pregnant woman agrees, and later on gives birth to a girl, the man's family provide 'kola nut' in the form of money. If this is accepted, it becomes the symbol to show that the girl would be raised up for the man, and after initiation, the marriage knot would be tied. In other instances a man might become interested in a young girl, who has yet to reach puberty. He would send his relatives with a *kukukorno* (country cloth), and *jabei* (a strand of beads), to the girl's parents. If the gifts are received by the girl's parents, it is a sign of consent. Palm wine, symbolising prosperity, is shared by all present. From then on the man must assist in the financial cost of raising the girl, and during initiation he is either partially or fully responsible for the financial details of the ceremony. After initiation the marriage takes place. If, as it sometimes happens, a girl in her youth rejects a man who might be old enough to be her father, she is forced to consent. There have been cases when the girl would run away, and if not found, the parents would have to refund all the money they have received from the prospective husband. If she is caught they take her forcefully to the house of the husband, and people hold her feet apart for him to consummate the marriage.⁴³

In other instances, marriages can be arranged as a means of establishing and strengthening political ties. A sub chief or elder could give his younger sister or daughter or ward as a wife to the paramount chief, or any other powerful politician, in exchange for political favours.⁴⁴ At times the chiefs or any other wealthy person might choose from the recent initiates when they parade during the coming out ceremony. Again, at times, the girl's parents might arrange a marriage for her within a family they know or because they stand to benefit financially from such a union.

Another form of marriage contract results from levirate or widow inheritance. The next of kin of a dead man inherits the wife or wives of the deceased relative. Sometimes this is done to raise up children for the dead man, or just to provide some form of security for the widow/s, while in the process ensuring that the inheritance of the dead man, including children, stays within the family.

Another way of choosing a partner is by the individuals themselves, and by mutual consent. It is significant to note that even when a partner is chosen by mutual consent, as in any marriage, parental, family, and community approval and consent are of vital importance. Without this approval and consent the couple would be heading for rejection by their community. In times of crisis there would be no one willing to help because: 'The community solidarity and well-being was openly flaunted by the couple. They had behaved as if they had no owners'.⁴⁵ In such a situation the guilty party would have to beg the family with gifts to become accepted and recognised, or they move to another locality. Sometimes such marriages are subjected to extreme stress, caused by harassing in-laws, who could even go to the extent of using bad medicine to break up the marriage.

4.C A *Marriage ceremony*

One typical example of a marriage ceremony among the Limba is this: After the initiation of a girl, the intending husband sends a delegation to the girl's parents. If he is already married the senior wife must accompany the delegation, and take part in all negotiations. This is so because the junior wife has to enter the marriage with the approval and consent of the senior wife. Until her first child is born she would have to live with, and learn what is expected of her, from the senior wife. To enter the union without the approval and consent of the senior wife would lead to a lot of jealousy and ill treatment.

On the completion of a successful negotiation, a date is fixed for the actual marriage ceremony. For the ceremony the parents of the girl inform their relatives and friends, so that they would be present to lend their support when the relatives of the man arrives.⁴⁶ On the agreed date the representatives of the would-be husband take with them to the girl's house several items which include the following: cowrie shells, money, a sheep or cow (depending on the economic wealth of the husband's family), two oval shaped baskets (*kusankirie*), containing salt and kola nuts.⁴⁷ They also take a piece of white cloth, and some palm wine. At the girl's house the representatives of the would-be husband go through the formality of stating their intentions all over again. The girl's parents are asked in turn to say whether they are willing to give their consent. After them, other relatives, such as the girl's grandparents, uncles and aunts, also give their consent. Finally the girl is called in last to give her consent. After the approvals, the girl's parents and relatives taste of the *meeti* (salt) in the basket. By tasting the salt they are taking an oath that they are witnesses to the marriage. Therefore, in

times of crisis they are duty bound to help in restoring taste to the marriage, and not to contribute to its break up.

After the tasting of the salt, the ancestors are called upon to witness the pact. The palm wine is drunk from the same cup symbolising unity of purpose. Palm wine is also a symbol of prosperity, a sign of the good will and prosperity that should accompany the marriage. The kola nuts representing life, and therefore fertility, are then shared among all present. The white cloth is kept to be used on the wedding night. The cowrie shells, money, and animal are given to the girl's parents as bride price. The bride price is a token of appreciation and compensation to the parents for having taken care of the girl whose productive labour they are now about to lose. It also represents a legal surety that all children produced by the woman within that union will automatically belong to the man.⁴⁸ The bride price also acts as a significant check on the behaviour of both spouses, as the girl would not want her parents to have to refund it nor would the man want to lose it.

After the ceremony, sometimes the girl stays for another week to allow the parents to use some of the money received by them as bride price to buy items for her to take to her new home. If everything is ready for her departure she leaves her parents home with the representatives of her husband after the marriage ceremony. She takes with her some husk rice, mortar and pestle, a winnowing fan, and other domestic items.⁴⁹ She also takes a set of new clothes for herself and a gift for the husband. The white cloth given to her by the husband is also included in her luggage. She is accompanied by her aunt who stays until after the consummation of the marriage before returning back to the girl's parents.

At the husband's house, the white cloth is spread on the top of the bed for what is known as the *yuruthun theru* (ceremony of deflowering the bride). This ceremony is very important for a young lady entering marriage for the first time. She is expected to have preserved her chastity up to this point. The blood she is going to shed during this ceremony is a symbol of the preservation of life. It shows that life had not already been flowing wastefully, and that the girl had preserved the sanctity of human reproduction. The blood when shed would unlock the door for offspring to be born into the family of both the living and the dead. At dawn the next day the mother-in-law and the girl's aunt enter the room to examine the cloth. If there are blood stain marks on the cloth, it is concluded that the girl was a virgin. If the bride was a virgin, a white kola nut is given to the aunt to take back to the girl's parents. If

she was not a virgin a red kola nut is sent. It is considered to be a very big disgrace to the girl's parents if she is not a virgin. Virginity symbolises purity of both the body and moral life. Sometimes the wife would already have lost her virginity to the husband or someone else before marriage. If the husband is very much in love he helps her conceal this fact and prevent her disgrace, by pricking himself and allowing the blood to flow, or by making the stains with any red liquid.

4.D *Divorce*

Another important aspect of marriage is divorce. This could happen for various reasons: continuing unfaithfulness or desertion, continued cruelty on the part of the husband, jealousy among co-wives, barrenness, and witchcraft accusations levied against the wife. Usually it is not easy for a divorce to go through, for the respective families and elders would go to all lengths to prevent this taking place. What is common is separation with the wife returning to her parents for anything from a day to a few months. The parents, not wanting to refund the bride-price, would prevail on her to return to her husband's home. Sometimes she is even punished by them to prevent her becoming too comfortable, to the point of not wanting to go back.⁵⁰ However, sometimes the divorce does go through, particularly when it involves adultery on the part of the woman. If this situation becomes persistent the husband has the right to take his complaints to the *kuboi* (native court). The wife names the culprit, and if the accused (*babei*) pleads guilty, he is made to refund the bride-price.

On the whole, however, marriage is considered to be a sacred institution by all the ethnic groups in the country. Therefore, every effort is made to maintain the harmony of the union, as it is the place where the whole community, those living, those dead, and those yet unborn, all converge.

5.A *Death*

Death is the final rite of passage. It is the necessary condition for one to become an ancestor. It stands between the world of the living and the world of the spirits, between the visible and the invisible. For the Limba it is a departure and not a complete annihilation. The only change that happens is the decay of the physical body, while the soul moves on to another

existence in the after life (*tieh*). The terms used in describing death indicate that it is just a transition from this life to another and not extinction: 'gone round the hill', 'gone to buy salt', and 'gone on a journey'. Mbiti notes:

At the moment of physical death the person becomes a living dead: he is neither alive physically, nor dead relative to the corporate group. His own sasa (present) period is over, he enters fully into the zamani (past) period; but as far as the living who knew him are concerned, he is kept back in the sasa period from which he can disappear only gradually.⁵¹

The situation to be avoided is to have nobody to keep you in the present, for when this happens life becomes extinct.

Even though death is the inevitable end of the physical life, it is still considered to be disruptive and cruel. The various ethnic groups in the country have many myths to explain that God did not intend that humans should die, but due to some disobedience or the other, humans now have to face death. One Limba myth states that:

At first, the toad did not like mankind. He had an opportunity of proving his dislike in this way: *Kanu Masala* was squeezing out leaves for medicine. He squeezed the medicine to give to people, so that they would not see death. He asked, 'Who will carry the medicine to the humans'? The snake said 'I will carry it for them. We are near to each other'. But the toad did not like human beings; he wanted to kill them all. He said 'Here is the medicine'. He put it on his head to carry it. He set out to go, but when he jumped, the medicine fell off. It had been said that anyone carrying this medicine should not spill it.....People would not have died but for the toad.⁵²

5.B Causes

In Sierra Leone the cause of events is not limited to the natural and physical factors. Explanations are sought in the extraordinary and supernatural. Effort is therefore made in tracing the supernatural causes. Even though death is part of the natural rhythm of life, almost every death is thought to have unnatural causes. There are four main causes of death among the Limba: Firstly, natural deaths, such as deaths of most old people, are said to be caused by *Kanu Masala*. When this happens, death is regarded as a reward for work well done, and a sign that *Kanu* wants the person to rest and be with him. Secondly, deaths can be caused by witchcraft (*huweki*). The fear of witchcraft is very prevalent in the society. Witches are considered to be anti-social; they attack their victims when motivated by jealousy, hatred, envy and malice. When youths and young children die, it is normally attributed to this cause. Thirdly, deaths resulting from the effects of a swear (*kudori*). Swears are feared as being very powerful and dangerous. A swear is the potent object in a

curse, which pursues and punishes the culprit by its mystical power. This is the most effective and final means of catching a culprit. It also prevents and punishes witches discovered by its powers. Once laid against an offender a swear pursues and catches the guilty. A further effect of a swear is its tendency to gradually pursue its way through the whole family of the culprit, punishing them also until it is ceremonially revoked. Finally, there is death caused by the spirits (*waali*). The Limba believe that there are a lot of evil spirits who are known to have derived their powers from *Kanu*, but who use the derived powers independently of him to cause countless number of disasters.

Most deaths are attributed to one of the three reasons above other than the natural, and they say it always involves a human agency, for even in the case of death by a spirit this is usually only possible because somebody had delivered up the victim to the spirit. The evil therefore is to be removed from the community by exposing the culprit, and performing rites of purification to restore the well being of the community.⁵³

5.C Burial ceremonies

The belief in the existence of the ancestors, and the accompanying belief in their ability to influence the lives of the living, is demonstrated by the care with which the dead are treated. The burial ceremonies are thought to be very significant as the first steps in the transformation of the deceased into an ancestor. The dead are therefore treated with utmost reverence. The deceased must receive proper burial, by the person/s designated by right and duty to see to it.⁵⁴ The corpse must be properly looked after, the deceased placed in a new status, his vacated roles filled, his property disposed of, and the solidarity of his group reaffirmed. In this regard, some people before death emphasise certain things they would want done for them after they die. After their death, either before or after the burial, according to the wish of the deceased, those living adhere to their requests. It is strongly believed that failure to carry out a death-bed wish will cause the deceased to strike out with disastrous consequences for the living. For instance in Karina village a man named Amadu Turay told his wife Fudia Samura that when he died he should not be taken to his hometown of Tonko. He should be buried between two big trees within their compound at Karina. When he died his wish was carried out. The digging of the soil for the grave was done without any difficulty. This my informants told me was a confirmation of the fact that the deceased was content. The wife and children are all experiencing good health. Since Pa

Amadu's wish was carried out, rather than making trouble, he is caring for his family, and giving them 'cool hearts'.⁵⁵

The following description of death ceremonies among the Limba for a chief and a witch serve as an indication of the importance of carrying out the burial ceremonies in the community. The ceremony performed for a chief, although elaborate, is similar to that of any elder in the society. A witch, on the other hand, is an outcast whose activities are considered to be anti-social.

A Chief

The role of the chief in the Limba community is more judicial than anything else. The first duty of the chief is to maintain harmonious relations between his subjects. When a case is heard in court, the decision determining who was right and who was wrong must be followed by an exhortation to the contending parties to agree. So the man against whom the judgement had been given would make the appropriate apology (often in terms of a gift) to his opponent in the presence of the chief or his representative. In short a chief has a conciliatory role as he judges contending parties, not so much to punish, as to reconcile. Just like the ancestors give 'cool hearts' to people in the community, so the chief is an instrument for restoring 'cool hearts' to people in the community. The chief should be able to 'speak well' and make people's hearts cool again. When therefore a chief treats his people well, *Kanu* may not allow him to be killed by witchcraft; however if he becomes abusive and ill-treats his people, *Kanu* may allow the witchcraft to take effect and he may die.⁵⁶ This is significant, as the Limba argue that a man becomes chief only because *Kanu* chooses him to be chief. Arrogance or repression becomes a deviation in his attitude which diverts him from 'speaking peace' to his people. Since this is contrary to God's will for the community, he removes his protection, thereby bringing him to a halt. So intense is the belief in witchcraft as an evil supernatural agency that it serves as a useful check to the chief in his administrative duties.

The restoration and maintenance of 'cool heart', in other words peace and harmony in the community, is vital for its well being. This is the case as Limba society is based on a clan relationship that embraces the living, the dead, and the unborn. The individual's life is not a separate entity, but part of the corporate group. So the solidarity of the group depends on the

harmony existing between its members. The corporate solidarity of the tribe becomes a fundamental factor of life; conflicts are disruptive to the life of the community, and therefore to the chief's role.

The chief's religious functions are exercised rather in his role of general supervisor than as the specific mediator between the ancestors and the people. He should be present at every important ritual, and when the ritual is for a dead chief, he calls on the dead chiefs as he is part of the ruling lineage. But he is not a traditional religious leader: in rituals it is always the most senior elder who calls on the ancestors. Since the elder has lived long enough to see the rituals re-enacted over a period of time, he would be more accurate in the prescribed procedures. Also the fact that age connotes wisdom and wisdom knows how to deal with the ancestors, makes the elder a better person to call on the ancestors.

When a Limba chief falls ill and there is no hope of his recovery, he is either removed to a hut in an isolated area, or to the sacred bush of the men's leading secret society (*gbangbani*). During this period of isolation, he becomes inaccessible to the general public. He is visited only by the leading elders, and his would-be successor. During this period only one woman is allowed access. This woman is usually the wife who was '*kanta*' with him; that is the wife who sat by his side when he was crowned chief. This is usually the first wife called '*Bowara*'.

The seclusion is to remove the possibility of people knowing about his death before the official announcement. Just before this announcement certain rites are to be performed to cleanse the deceased, and to notify the ancestors who would later on be receiving him. The seclusion also prevents witches, and others with ill intent, from hastening his death. Before death the chief is given a last drink of water to help him 'up the hill'. He is held in an upright position until he breathes his last, before he is laid down. This is significant because of the belief that death is a journey, and the deceased needs to be helped on this journey. If he is not held in an upright position then it is said the deceased had been allowed to die unaided like an animal in the bush.⁵⁷

When the chief finally dies, his death is kept secret for awhile. Even if all are aware of it, it is not permissible for them to say so until after the public announcement. Before the public announcement, the society elders have to perform 'cleansing rites' on the corpse. These rites

are very important as the chief in this liminal stage is considered to be sacred and even dangerous. The ancestors are called upon to be present, and his powers are 'cooled'.

After the cleansing rites, the public is informed. Firstly, the *gbangbani*, the masked figure representing the spirit of the ancestors, sends out a deep wailing sound. After this, if the chief was a warrior, a gun is fired by an elder who might have fought alongside the chief in battles. If he was not a warrior a horn is blown, and the *tabule* drum is struck three times. After this the *bowara*, wearing a black head tie, informs the other wives of the chief's 'journey'. After the public announcement everyone is free to express grief. The chief is never referred to as dead; since death connotes inactiveness. The deceased chief is still considered active, so they refer to him as 'having gone round the hill' or 'taken a journey'.

For the vigil, the whole community assembles in the chief's compound. During the vigil the *gbangbani* gives the first performance. This is followed by other performances by any society the chief was a member of. After this a lot of singing and clapping takes place. Most of the songs are praise songs on behalf of the dead chief. The elders make long moralising speeches, that are repeated by the herald so that all the crowd may hear.

When the corpse is laid out for public viewing, chiefs and elders from within and outside of his chieftom pay their last respect to the deceased. After them the rest of the people present pay their respect. During this time all those whom the deceased might have offended, or those whom had offended the deceased, either offer forgiveness or ask for forgiveness. This is because of the belief that liabilities acquired during one's lifetime become a disability after death. Those he owed, as well as those who owed him, must state their claims because they believe the deceased is still alive, even though in the spirit form, and knows exactly what is going on.

The chief is buried with his favourite possessions, like his traditional gown (*ronko*), his weapons and charms, and foodstuff. He is also given gifts to give to the ancestors when he gets to their land. As a rule, the body of the deceased chief, or any leading society member for that matter, is removed at night after the public funeral to be given the proper societal burial, which is secret. It is forbidden for non-society members to attend this societal burial as the following incident demonstrate: In 1974 a chief of Sella Limba died. During his societal burial there were some non-members in attendance. This caused a very big snake to

mysteriously appear out of the grave, causing a general stampede. After the departure of non-members the snake mysteriously disappeared in the same way it had appeared. The chief was then given the proper societal burial.⁵⁸

Chiefs and leading society members are buried in the societal bush. Most other people are buried in the house as in former days, or nowadays in the compound or somewhere very close to the compound, so that they are not far removed from the living. Wherever the burial takes place it involves the earth and shade. The earth is very important as the grave is considered to be in the womb of mother earth. So the corpse is sown a physical body and raised in a spiritual one. The shade is necessary to prevent the heat of the sun from tormenting the rest of the deceased. Adama, an old lady in Kamakwie, refuses to go to Freetown even though her son has often invited her over. I was informed by the son, Sorie, that her reason for this refusal is because she is afraid she might die there, and be buried in an open grave, which would allow the heat of the sun to torment her rest. She wants to die and be buried in her village of Kamakwie, where she would rest in the cool shade.⁵⁹

A significant aspect is that the would-be successor of the chief is to attend all the ceremonies, whether or not he is a close relation, and he should take a major part in all the proceedings. This makes for continuity, and serves to strengthen the link between the would-be chief and his predecessor.

Witches

Witches are feared as possessing a mysterious inherent power to harm others by secret means. They attack their victims when motivated by envy, jealousy, and greed. They not only destroy lives, but also cause other disasters to overtake their victims.⁶⁰ The belief is so real that in almost every Limba home protective charms are hung to guard against witches. Medicine is also prepared to deter them, and amulets are worn to ward off attacks. Since witches are the embodiment of evil in the community, when they die, they are not given a proper burial.

The Limba believe that a witch in the natural human existence is vulnerable to certain charms and spells, and could be repelled by them. But at death the deceased witch becomes immune to any protective charm or destructive spell, thereby becoming extremely

dangerous. Considerable care is therefore taken to neutralise the powers of the witch before burial. This is done by a test conducted by a diviner. The diviner opens the abdomen and removes the spleen, the organ in which the witch substance resides. The spleen is then placed in a pot containing certain crushed leaves and water. If it floats, the result is negative and the deceased is declared clean, but if it sinks, the deceased is declared to have been a witch.⁶¹

If the person was not a witch the spleen is placed in the abdomen before burial. If the person was a witch, the spleen is cut up into pieces. It is not placed in the abdomen, but is buried separately in the same hole. This is because of the belief that by removing the physical organ which harbours the witch substance, the deceased is deprived of that constituent factor and so becomes harmless. The corpse is not given a proper burial. The corpse is dragged around the village or town naked, before being dumped in the grave where stones are hurled at the body. The grave is dug by his sons if he has any, or by any members of his immediate kin, who would later on undergo rites of purification. To prevent the witch coming out of the grave, a long stick is driven right through the corpse to pin it down, and thorns are placed in the grave to choke the witch.⁶²

5.D *Post burial ceremonies*

The Limba, like many other African groups, observe a number of elaborate post-burial ceremonies. They consider it of great importance to carry out these ceremonies, as death alone is not a sufficient condition for becoming an ancestor. Proper burial, which includes the post-burial rituals appropriate to the deceased's status conducted by the person or persons designated by right and duty to see to it, is also necessary. It is only after the completion of these rituals that the deceased is considered to have been properly installed in the ancestral land, while still remaining a member of the living community. In other words the deceased has become one of the 'living dead'.⁶³

A major ceremony performed for a deceased among the Limba is the *Aboreh* (mourning ceremony). According to the financial status of the surviving relatives, the ceremony is held any time from the fortieth day up to twelve months after. Also when a person dies during the rains it is not performed until the dry season when there is harvest and plenty of food. The *aboreh* lasts for a whole week. During the first few days, if the deceased was a society

member, the society performs rituals which non-members are prohibited from attending. During the performance the ancestors are called upon to welcome the deceased. When the ritual becomes public, the whole community is involved; praise singers delve into the ancestry of the deceased, recounting their ancestry and aligning the dead person with them.

On the last day of the ritual a sacrifice is made. This begins at dawn, when a white fowl is carried to the grave of the deceased by some elders. At the grave, rice is placed on the head stone, and the spokesman for the group carries the fowl in his hand. He begins by praising and thanking the ancestors for receiving the deceased as one of them. He then implores the deceased to return and take his place in their midst now that he has completed his journey to the other world (*tieh*). When he completes his speech the fowl is supposed to jump down from his hand and eat the rice on the grave. When the fowl does that it is believed the deceased has responded. The fowl is then killed and its blood allowed to flow on the grave. If the fowl does not jump down, the process is repeated until it does. This sacrifice is an acknowledgement of the fact that the deceased is now fully installed as an ancestor, and must therefore assume his role in the community.

After the sacrifice a stone known as *betiyeh* is taken from the grave of the deceased and kept in a special container reserved for these stones. This stone is a symbol of the presence of the dead among his family. It is an indication that the person is not dead but alive. After the graveside ritual a communal feast is held. For this feast an animal is slaughtered and its blood allowed to flow. Some of the meat along with kola nuts and rice flour is offered to the ancestors, who now include the recently dead. The rest of the animal is cooked and eaten in a communal feast. The shedding of blood further enhances the continuity between those living and the ancestors. The animal blood is substitutionary; it represents the blood of the living, and therefore it is a symbol of the bond between those living and the ancestors who are symbolically living in the womb of mother earth. The blood is also symbolic of life and fertility as life springs from blood. Life then becomes an on-going and active process.

On the last day of the ritual, if the deceased was a chief, the new chief is ceremonially installed. The installation bridges the social gap, and resolves the problem of the disruption created as a consequence of his death. The new chief is expected to cut down trees in the dead chief's farm as a symbol of his taking over his duties. On this day the responsibility, status and property of the deceased, be it a chief or an ordinary individual, is distributed.

The wives are ritually bathed, and the next of kin jumps over their outstretched legs. The ritual bath frees the wives from the spirit of the deceased, whose interest in their sexuality continues beyond the grave. The jumping over is symbolic of the fact that the next of kin is taking over the fertility of the deceased. It is also a sign that the wives are now free to either stay on in the husband's kinship group or start new unions outside of this group.

The Limba also have an annual ceremony of cooking for the graveyard. During this ceremony, the graves are brushed, and food is prepared for all deceased relatives. The view of some informants is that the graves are to be brushed irregularly, as brushing regularly would be symbolic of inviting death.

It must be noted that when a witch dies his memory is completely forgotten. There are no communal ceremonies or rituals performed on his behalf. In fact the community is more concerned with the living members of his family, just in case they have been infected with the witch spirit. A cleansing rite is performed on them known as *masain*. The ceremony is performed by a diviner. It includes the use of the trunk of a banana tree, which after some ritual incantations, he ties with a rope and drags outside of the village. The dragging of the trunk is symbolic of the ill effects of the witch leaving the relatives and the village for good. The ceremony also includes a ritual bath before they are accepted again into the community. This bath frees and purifies them from any effect of the witch spirit.⁶⁴

The post-burial ceremonies are significant in that they help in maintaining the balance between the living and the ancestors. They are a symbol of fellowship and recognition of the presence of the ancestors. The rituals also provide a framework which emphasises the continuity of the Limba social system; the values of the community are handed down to the adults and children present at the ceremony. A child present at the rituals learns the qualities to imitate. Reverence for his ancestors, including the newly dead would be imprinted on his mind. Above all he would have the feeling of belonging to the community. When in his own mind he stops to reason who he is, or when asked who he is, he could say: 'I am the son of so and so, who did such and such, and he was the son of so and so, who did such and such'. He would try to emulate his ancestors and he would know that he is surrounded and protected by them. An adult would be reminded that he belongs to a community. He is reminded that death is an inevitable factor of life, and that witchcraft, or neglect of his duties, might mean a bad funeral from his community.

6. Conclusion of the chapter

From the available materials discussed in this chapter, it can be seen that the rites of passage define significant ways in which the continuity and values of *kabudu* are instilled and maintained. This is done without reference to ethnicity, religious affiliation, or social status. The rites of passage emphasise the fact that humans are not born fully human, but become so through a gradual process of integration into the community. The rites contribute to enhancing the corporate understanding of the ideal *kabudu*. An individual alone is in potential danger, either to oneself or as a threat to others. Within a properly organised community, an individual is 'safe', sharing common aspirations and behaviour with others. Maintaining the right balance in society is therefore of vital importance, for what affects an individual in the community also affects the well-being of the community. This explains the need for the expressions of social and religious outputs as exemplified in the various rites of passage, which establish the individual's identity not as a separate entity, but as part of the corporate whole.

Through the rites of passage the individual sees it as a social duty to embrace the virtues of caring and sharing, discipline, hardwork, respect for age and life. These virtues are instilled throughout the education and socialisation process of the individual, from childhood through puberty to adulthood.

¹ The Christian Krios in the Capital Freetown, are the only local group not observing the puberty initiation rituals. Even the Muslim Krios observe them.

² *Bondo* has existed in Sierra Leone since 1668 when it was accurately described by Olfert Dapper. See Fyfe, C. *Sierra Leone Inheritance*, London: OUP, 1964, p.39 - 40.

³ Arnold van Gennep, a French anthropologist, was the pioneer in the study of rites of passage. He wrote his book bearing the name '*Rites of Passage*' in 1909. It was translated from French to English in 1960 by Monika Vizedom, and Geraldine Caffee. In this book he uses the term rites of passage in the analysis of rituals accompanying an individual in his life cycle, as well as, in his analysis of the rituals accompanying the periodic changes associated with natural phenomena. (*Calendric Rituals*). In this chapter rites of passage refer to life cycle rituals.

⁴ Eliade, M. (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 12, New York: Macmillan, 1987, p.381.

⁵ Van Gennep, A. *The Rites of Passage*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, p.11.

⁶ Turner, V.W. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969, p.95.

⁷ Douglas, M. *Purity and Danger*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, p.109.

⁸ Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p.110.

⁹ Being a member of an ethnic group that celebrates the various rites of passage, I was able to obtain information through participation, experience, and informal conversations over a long period of time. My observations and experience reveal that most of the local ethnic groups subscribe to the same beliefs as the Limba concerning the rites of passage. For example all the local groups consider marriage to be incomplete without the birth of a child.

¹⁰ Sometimes the barren woman is accused of being a witch, or of having exchanged her fertility to a spirit for wealth or power. This accusation is not completely unjustified as the spirits do require something from possessors in exchange for benefits derived. There are stories about some female politicians who have exchanged their fertility for power and wealth; for instance, Madam Yoko, who was ruler of the Kpaa Mende State in 1884. See endnote 25, p.46.

¹¹ Informal discussions with the inhabitants of several households in Kamabai, including the household of Amadu Mansaray and Musu Conteh on 28 & 29 December 1987.

¹² It is very common among the local groups for a pregnant woman to keep her pregnancy a secret for as long as possible. Even when it becomes obvious, the actual delivery date should remain a secret. This is to prevent harm being done to the pregnant woman and the baby.

¹³ Interview with Mami Fudia, a traditional midwife in Kamabai, on 27 December 1987. Informal conversations with some of those delivered by her.

¹⁴ This period of seclusion represents the liminal stage, with the baby being what Victor Turner terms the "Liminal Personae", one who is neither this nor that, neither here nor there, but rather betwixt and between. The baby in this stage is dangerous and in danger itself.

¹⁵ This incident took place in the central part of Freetown, in July 1991. Information obtained from Sorie B. Bangura relative of the deceased on 10 June 1992, at FBC.

¹⁶ Informal conversation with my aunt, Jeneba, who is also a midwife on 14 March 1995.

¹⁷ The new mother does not go with the crowd, but stays in confinement.

¹⁸ Interview with Sallay Conteh on 18 June 1992, and observations made in Freetown. On several occasions Limba twins are placed in a winnowing fan and taken to the market place.

¹⁹ For all the local groups the naming ceremony only takes place after the umbilical cord falls off.

²⁰ Sometimes if the would-be mother is from another village she stays at the midwife's home until after the naming ceremony. Most of the time the would-be mother finds a midwife in the same village as her mother, and this enables her to go to her mother's for her period of confinement after delivery.

²¹ Informal conversations and observations made over a long period of time. The most recent being in Freetown on 5 September 1995.

²² This is one reason for polygamy as the husband is not expected to abstain from sex while the wife is nursing a baby.

²³ Sawyerr, H. 'Soteriology Viewed From The African Situation', in Parratt, J. (ed.) *The Practice of Presence*, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, p.117.

²⁴ Parratt, J. *Papuan Belief and Ritual*, New York: Vantage Press, 1976, p.64.

²⁵ Interview with Pa Mumuneh Conteh and two other elders who happened to be present at the time of the interview on 28 December 1986, in Kamabai.

²⁶ Mary Douglas notes that the clitoris is a rudiment of maleness. When removed it frees the individual from all sexual ambiguity. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

²⁷ This narrative is handed down among the Limba, and was told me by an old lady, Burrah Sesay in Kamabai, on 29 December 1986.

²⁸ Interviews held in Kamabai in December of 1986 and 87. I obtained most of the information through informal conversations with three of my friends who have gone through

the male rituals. They prefer to remain anonymous for fear of retribution from their community and the spirit world.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Ottenberg, S. 'Male and Female Secret Societies', in Blakely, T. et al. (eds.), *Religion in Africa*, London, Portsmouth N.H.: James Currey & Heinemann, 1994, p.376.

³¹ It takes anything from a few weeks to a year to complete the male initiation as the initiates sometimes have to go to school, or because of financial constraints.

³² Informal conversation with Mr Carew in Freetown on 20 November 1988. He heard the sound on several occasions while working in Kamakwie, from September 1985 - July 1987

³³ Fyfe, C. *Sierra Leone Inheritance*, p.39 - 40.

³⁴ In the towns it is now increasingly being done between July and August, when the schools are on long vacation.

³⁵ Informal conversations with women both in Kamabai and Freetown, who prefer to remain anonymous, and observations the most recent being in Freetown on 17 August 1995.

³⁶ Sometimes the hymen is broken due to other reasons than sexual intercourse.

³⁷ Some girls due to financial and other constraints do not return to the bush after the washing of hands ceremony. Some return months or years later to complete because of the belief that not to complete the ceremony would lead to bad luck.

³⁸ Turner, V.W. *Drums of Affliction*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.

³⁹ Eliade, M. *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 12, p.230.

⁴⁰ I was among those who went to watch the house burning. A number of stories all related to the curse on the family were told by old people, some of whom say they were around when the theft took place.

⁴¹ Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p.133.

⁴² *ibid.*, p.142.

⁴³ This was the case of one of my cousins. Her parents had already been receiving gifts and money on her behalf when she was still an infant. After initiation in December 1990, she ran away to Freetown, instead of getting married to the would-be husband. Up until 1993, the parents were still refunding the gifts and money they had been receiving on her behalf.

⁴⁴ It is customary for the president of the country to be given wives by those seeking political favours.

⁴⁵ This is a common view shared not only by many informants, but also by most ethnic groups in the country.

⁴⁶ Some of my informants informed me that this lends weight to the fact that the girl is not alone, but has a host of relations backing her. The man must take heed of the way he treats her once she becomes his wife.

⁴⁷ On very rare occasions the would-be husband's family could only afford a white chicken.

⁴⁸ This is irrespective of whether he is impotent, or if the wife has been unfaithful.

⁴⁹ This is so that the husband or her co-wives would not say she entered the marriage empty like a pauper.

⁵⁰ When in Kamabai in 1987, during discussions with three ladies, I was told of a lady who had ants tied to her shaven head, as a punishment by her relatives for refusing to go back to her husband.

⁵¹ Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p.159, *sasa* period represents the present period in which the surviving relatives of a deceased keeps his memory alive. The deceased is remembered and kept in a state of personal immortality. The deceased can only recede into the *zamani* or past period gradually. This sometimes takes up to four or five generations when the last person who knew the deceased is dead, and his memory as far as the living are concerned becomes vague.

⁵² Finnegan, R. *Limba Stories and Story Telling*, London: HMS office, 1967, p.233.

⁵³ Interview with Pa Mumuneh Conteh in Kamabai on 28 December 1986.

⁵⁴ Fortes also notes this point among the Tallensi when he says that the chief filial obligation of sons is the performance of funeral rites for their parents; this duty is supported and upheld by religious sanctions. To fail in it is to incur the everlasting wrath of the ancestors, since the funeral rites are the first steps in the transformation of parents into ancestor spirits. See M. Fortes, *Oedipus and Job*, p.29.

⁵⁵ Interview with Momoh in Freetown on 17 December, & Sumaila in Kamabai on 27 December 1987.

⁵⁶ Finnegan, R. *Survey*, p.41.

⁵⁷ Sorie M.Bangura, one of the individuals I interviewed in Freetown, told me that his mother now an old lady, does not want to come to Freetown, as she is afraid of dying unaided. She prefers staying in her hometown of Kamakwie, so that when death comes, she would be helped on her journey.

⁵⁸ Conversation with Somaila Sesay on 27 December 1987 in Kamabai.

⁵⁹ Interview with Sorie M.Bangura in Freetown on 20th August 1990.

⁶⁰ Wilson, M. *Religion and the transformation of society*, Cambridge: CUP, 1971, p.35, describes witchcraft as 'ultimately evil'.

⁶¹ For a similar description among the Mendes see Harris, W.T. & Sawyerr, H. *Springs*, p.81.

⁶² In October 1994, a deceased witch had to be exhumed in one of the mountain villages near Freetown. Many disasters were happening to her family. A diviner revealed that she was a witch, and, since she died without confessing, nothing had been done to curtail the witch spirit. So she was still operating. When the corpse was exhumed it was as fresh as if it had just been buried, even though she had been dead for over a year. This incident was reported in the news.

⁶³ Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p. 159.

⁶⁴ Interview with Momoh Bangura in Freetown on 17 December 1987. See thesis page 31.

Chapter Three

The Influence of Modernity on Traditional Life Patterns

1. *Modernity as a factor creating change*

The factors described in chapters one and two are representative of the traditional ideal of *kabudu*, an ideal that has seen certain aspects of tradition retained, while others have been modified and extended due to contact and interaction with the forces of modernity. This chapter is an attempt at examining the assumption that the encounter between the traditional ideal of *kabudu* and the forces of modernity is modifying and widening certain traditional features of *kabudu* as it adopts and adapts to modernity, while at the same time the overriding need for *kabudu* is retained. The chapter will examine the influences of Christianity, formal education, urbanisation and migration on traditional life patterns.

The term modernity implies what is new as opposed to what is old, what is innovative as opposed to what is traditional or handed down. It is a means of recognising that cultural change and awareness of that change are pervasive in contemporary societies. There is a self-conscious embracing of and commitment to new ideals as opposed to the old, and the acceptance that logically consistent and universalizable principles ought to be the basis for change.¹

The forces of modernity are characterised by Western political, economic, educational, and religious structures. These structures are bringing about changes on a universal scale in contemporary societies. Change in the contemporary world is therefore an unavoidable factor of life. With reference to Africa John Mbiti rightly observes that change is inevitable since:

Africa is caught up in a world revolution which is so dynamic that it has almost got out of human control. It is a revolution of man as a whole, and therefore no people or country can remain unaffected by this new rhythm of human history.²

As noted on page 36 in this thesis, African religion and society are indivisible. Religious influence is very pervasive; it is what helps to shape societal values, fostering cohesion and harmony within the society. In the inevitable process of modernity, religious beliefs and practices cannot be unaffected. Changes characteristic of the modern world also permeate religious behaviour. For the individual this involves the primal religious beliefs and

practices undergoing changes. One modern-day writer, Andrew F. Walls, argues that the forces of modernity have posed certain threats to primal religions.³ They threaten traditional values of worth, obligation, patterns of permission and prohibition. They disturb traditional hierarchical patterns evidenced in the changing understandings of the role of the ancestors, gender relations and power status. Walls argues that the changes have created a 'disturbance of focus' which forces traditional societies to see beyond local concerns in order to explain the fact that their society now forms a part of a 'total world of events'.⁴

According to Walls, the ways primal religions respond to modernity fall into eight categories:

1. Recession - Primal religions are receding and are being replaced by universal religions like Christianity and Islam.
2. Absorption - An assimilation of primal religions into Christianity and Islam.
3. Restatement- The content of faith is remodelled by the conventions and vocabulary of the universal religions.
4. Reduction - Primal religions are reduced in scope and content so that they no longer reflect or affect the whole of life but only specific areas of it.
5. Invention - There are new inventions with the primal religion incorporating elements from other cultures.
6. Adjustments - Attempts are made to adjust and expand world views to take account of new phenomena.
7. Revitalisation - There is resurgence due to an assertion of cultural identity.
8. Appropriation - In some parts of the world there is the adoption or recommendation of primal religions by those who historically belong to quite another tradition.⁵

In all eight categories, Walls describes primal religions as being overtaken by the forces of modernity, so that what we see in today's world is either some form of incorporation into the universal religions, or a restatement that alters the primal religion in its original form.

Whether the responses involve incorporation or a restatement, they represent a determined and self-conscious reaction of supporters to the intensity and universality of the changes brought about by the forces of modernity. The responses serve to point out that the direct relationship between modernity and the primal religions can be varied and diverse. They range from adoption and accommodation of the new in a bid to gain a more meaningful

comprehension of the old, to a strong and determined attempt at preserving and reasserting the old traditions within the limits posed by the framework of the new.

Walls notes further that since the primal religions are characterised as local or ethnic they are unable to respond to the changes demanded by modernity. This, in Walls' view, creates a distortion of focus among primal peoples, who no longer believe in the ability of their traditional ways to resolve problems of a universal nature. The traditional system, therefore, loses some of its credibility. Supporters turn in large numbers to religions which more adequately cope with the redefined problems of modern societies, or they transform their original world view irretrievably in content, scope or impact.

Walls observes that, since 1945, large numbers of primalists have embraced either Christianity or Islam. As these two religions are more global in outlook than primal religions they have the ability to deal with wider concerns. He writes:

Christianity and Islam, with their capacity to link into a wider universe, their provision of alternative codes of behaviour and their demand for symbolic change requiring some sort of act of decision, continue to provide keys to meaning and a means of adjustment to new conditions when a people's traditional lore is no longer able to do so.⁶

Taking Walls' observations into consideration, attention will now be focused on Sierra Leone, to see whether primalists are now embracing Christianity and Islam, as well as to determine whether there is any disturbance in value and focus. This has a bearing for this study, as it will help in understanding the important role Christianity has played in modernity.

2.A *The Sierra Leone situation*

According to a survey conducted by Operation Mobilisation in 1993, it would seem as if traditional religion in Sierra Leone is receding and is being replaced by Christianity and Islam.⁷ The survey is biased in the sense that its aim is to electrify Christians into more proselytising actions. The emphasis was more on those areas where conversion to Christianity is deemed to be negligible. However, it is worth noting, as it is the only extensive survey of its kind that has been conducted in the country.

The survey shows religious changes in the country since 1900, with a projected figure to the year 2000. According to the survey, before 1940, conversion to Christianity and Islam from

the traditional religion was very gradual and minimal. The traditional religion still had about 75% of the population as adherents. Christianity had about 6.5 % adherents, and Islam had about 18.5%. The figures for the traditional religion are broad based, including all other religious affiliations apart from Christianity and Islam. Since 1940, there has been a sharp increase in conversion from the traditional religion to Christianity and Islam. This lends credence to Walls' observations that since the 1940s large numbers of primalists have embraced either Christianity or Islam. Whereas adherents to the traditional religion decreased to around 48%, Islamic conversion rose to around 43.1%, and Christianity to around 9.5%.

Magbaily Fyle's study on the history of Islam in Sierra Leone reveals that one reason why Islamic conversion from the traditional religion seems higher is because the introduction of Islam into the country was effected with far less cultural discontinuity. The Muslim invaders adopted the local customs and culture of the local inhabitants. In this respect they became more tolerant of the various beliefs and practices they met. When they settled down, they took wives among the local inhabitants, thereby cementing the bonds with the local communities.⁸ Projecting from 1991 - 2000, it is possible that the increase in conversion, particularly to Christianity, will be even higher than Islam. This does not mean the number of professing Christians will be higher than the number of professing Muslims, but that more people will convert to Christianity than had previously occurred in the country. This conversion will favour the evangelical brand of Christianity. In a survey conducted by 'The Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone', the researchers note that the upsurge in the evangelical brand of Christianity will continue because of, evangelical crusades and other evangelistic strategies like catering for the needs of rural folks adrift in the urban areas, as well as their role in relief and other social work, because of the onslaught of civil and political unrest.⁹

Despite this upsurge, in my observations the majority of individuals I have encountered still revert to some traditional practices, particularly in crisis situations. For example on 7 December 1990, during the 1990/91 academic year, I had a discussion with fifteen final year students in the department of theology, Fourah Bay College. I wanted to find out how they would respond in a crisis situation, like a prolonged illness. Along with hospital treatment, would they visit the diviner or just pray in the Christian or Muslim way? Thirteen of them, ten Christians and three Muslims, said they would revert to traditional practices, like visiting

diviners, and offering sacrifices to their ancestors, as well as praying to God in the Christian or Muslim way. All thirteen said they would not do it to harm others, but if they felt threatened, particularly by witches, they would seek self protection. Asked whether they would visit the diviner openly or in secret, nine would go secretly, for fear of being condemned for pursuing something incompatible with their faith. Of the fifteen, two said they would only pray to God, as they are evangelical Christians. These discussions, although not conclusive, suggest the view that the traditional religion does not die, but is adopted and accommodated in varying degrees by those who embrace the new faiths. Attention thus will now be directed to the origins and influence of Islam and in particular Christianity in Sierra Leonean society.

2.B Islam in Sierra Leone

Around the twelfth century, the great bend of the Niger River was the heartland of strong Muslim kingdoms. These kingdoms extended their power over an immense area in North and West Africa. One of these kingdoms was Mali whose inhabitants were Mandingo traders. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they spread throughout the Niger regions and overflowed into Sierra Leone. They came with their religion of Islam, gradually in small groups, as traders from the North.¹⁰ Some of the Mandingo traders eventually founded ruling clans among the older inhabitants of Sierra Leone, after assisting in war or performing some remarkable feats. Others remained as Arabic teachers, or small groups of settlers. Since they were in the minority, the tendency was for the new rulers to gradually adopt the local customs and culture.¹¹ In other words Islam was not established in Sierra Leone to any strong degree by these early Mandingo traders. Many lost their religion as they were swamped by more numerous non-Muslims.

Islamic influence of a more potent sort occurred in the early eighteenth century with the Futa Jalon *Jihad* (Muslim holy war) of 1727. The *Jihad* was launched by the Fulas to convert their Yalunka rulers to Islam. The success of the *Jihad* led to the creation of a strong Islamic state by the Fulas who had led it. The Fulas spread their influence into the Northern border towns of Sierra Leone. In the process, parts of Koranko and Limba areas accepted the Fulas as overlords. Some of their inhabitants converted to Islam. New Muslim towns and villages thus appeared in Koranko and Limba areas, and spread from there to other parts of Sierra Leone.¹²

On the whole the effects of Islam on Sierra Leone have been low-keyed, as Islam did not bring benefits such as formal education and industries. Christianity, on the other hand, brought these benefits in its wake. Some of the factors brought about directly or indirectly by Christianity will be examined below.

3.A *Origins of Christianity*

On the whole, the influence of Christianity in Sierra Leone has been far greater than that of any other imported religion. This has been due to the fact that Christianity introduced formal education and new political structures while increasing economic and social activities, thereby linking Sierra Leone with the wider world.

The first brand of Christianity to take root in Sierra Leone was that which was brought into the capital Freetown by the Nova Scotians (former slaves in America, who had settled in Nova Scotia) in 1792.¹³ The Nova Scotians were already Christians before arriving in Freetown. When they first landed on the shores of Freetown, their pastors led them ashore, singing a hymn of praise. They rejoiced before the Lord, who had brought them from bondage to the land of their forefathers. When all had arrived, the whole colony assembled in worship. They sang:

The day of Jubilee is come;
Return ye ransomed sinners home.¹⁴

In their new settlements they established chapels and Christian fellowship meetings. There was much involvement of the African laity in this early planting of Christianity, and Christianity was greatly sustained by the Africans themselves. It is noted that during colonialism and the missionary era, many of the Nova Scotian Christians were far more knowledgeable about the Bible and Christian doctrine than some of the missionaries sent to minister to them.¹⁵ A.F. Walls, commenting on the importance of Christianity for the Nova Scotian settlers, observes:

Christianity was for them dynamic and personal; no matter of doctrine could be indifferent; the personal experience of the individual and his sharing in fellowship with others - the sense of being the people of God, - was a matter of profound importance.¹⁶

Mrs Alexander Falconbridge, the wife of a British government agent in Sierra Leone in the 1790s observed that the Christian religiosity of the Nova Scotians, was the tool that helped

them forge a common identity; a necessary condition for the smooth functioning of *kabudu*. She notes:

I have never met with, heard, or read of, any set of people observing the same appearance of godliness; For I do not remember, since they first landed here, my ever awaking (and I have awoke at every hour of the night), without hearing preachings from some quarter or another.¹⁷

The Nova Scotians were devoted to regular Sunday attendance of church services, and weekly fellowship meetings. Their language was greatly influenced by biblical terms. Christianity became the foundation on which these early settlers carved a future for themselves and their community. The Maroons (former slaves in Jamaica), and the recaptives who followed after the Nova Scotians, also mostly came to adopt Christianity as the basis for the Krio community which evolved. The services conducted by the Africans were vibrant, meeting their needs as they combined the new norms of Christianity with deviations which made room for the adoption of certain traditional norms like the pouring of libation to the ancestors.¹⁸ With time, this brand of Christianity was replaced with the missionary era.

3.B The Missionaries

The earliest beginnings of missionary activities in Sierra Leone occurred in the early 1600s, when the Portuguese established their stations along the African coasts while pressing for a sea route to India.¹⁹ One of the earliest missionaries in Sierra Leone was a Jesuit priest, Father Barreira. He arrived in the Peninsula area in 1605.²⁰ He made a few converts, but failed to penetrate the interior. He returned home in 1610. He was followed by some other Portuguese priests, but conversion was not easy as people stuck to their own religion. The failure to win converts meant that Christianity did not take root in the country during this period.

Things took a dramatic turn when the British established Sierra Leone as a settlement for freed slaves in 1787. It was the hope of the British that Sierra Leone would become a Christian settlement with the freed slaves being nurtured in Christian principles.²¹ In January 1808 Sierra Leone became a British colony. By 1821 it had become the seat of British colonial administration in West Africa. On the recommendation of the British Parliament a unified form of government for all West Africa was created under the Governor -General in

Sierra Leone.²² It was also the base for the Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan and other Missions in West Africa.

In 1799, in England, a group of evangelical Christians, belonging to the Church of England, started a missionary fellowship group. The group adopted the name Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1813.²³ The then missionary fellowship group, later called CMS, first started work in Sierra Leone in 1804. In this year they sent two missionaries, Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig, to start work primarily among the Susu in the Rio Pongas area to the North. This initial venture was not aimed at the settlers in Freetown, since they were already Christians with churches of their own. This first initiative went wrong as the two missionaries were incapable of working profitably together.²⁴ The CMS sent out three more missionaries in 1806 to help with the Susu work. However, by 1811 it seemed that CMS efforts among the Susu had yielded very few converts to Christianity. The mission decided to turn its attention to the colony of Freetown, where since 1808 a large number of non-Christian settlers had started arriving. In 1816, a few years after the CMS started operating in Freetown they received the recognition of the British colonialists. The then colonial governor Charles MacCarthy was very much interested in the Christianisation of the settlers, particularly the liberated Africans, who had a high percentage of non-Christians in their midst. He saw their Christianisation as the first step in civilising them. Since the CMS and the colonial administration both had reciprocal aims and objectives for the settlers, a kind of partnership was forged by them. The society was invited by the colonial government to take responsibility for the spiritual, educational, moral and social guidance of the Africans. In return for these services, the government gave the CMS subsidies.²⁵

The CMS was followed by another missionary body, the Wesleyan Methodist, in 1811. The Wesleyans had also made early attempts at mission work in the North in March 1796. This never got off the ground as the two missionaries sent considered the task to be daunting. They developed cold feet, resigned and asked to be sent back to England. The Roman Catholics after their early attempts in 1605, made headway only in 1859. The American missionaries came on the scene in 1842. Their work was first started among the Mendes in the South.²⁶

In the early days Sierra Leoneans were suspicious of missions and missionary activities. Christianity seemed to have prospered largely because it had been supported by the British

colonial power. For instance Gustavus Nylander, who was among the second batch of missionaries sent by the CMS, became a teacher in the colonial government sponsored school, and was also chaplain to the colonial administration in Freetown.²⁷ The locals were also not happy with their new status under the colonial regime. Before colonialism they were actively involved in the transmission and adaptation of Christianity. With colonial rule white control was seen as indispensable for the effective management of the church. The locals were therefore relegated to secondary positions of influence. The suspicion of missionaries was not just confined to Sierra Leone but was to be found all over the continent. Early missionary effort was seen as one of several agents, each of whom played their part in the subjugation of the inhabitants of the country where they worked. A statement by an early British missionary to South Africa makes this point:

While our missions are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilisation.....they are extending British interests, British influence and the British Empire....Whenever the missionary places his standard among a savage tribe, their prejudices against the colonial government give way, their dependence upon the colonial is increased by the creation of artificial wants..... Industry, trade and agriculture spring up.²⁸

It was common for the European powers to harness an area in Africa on the pretext of protecting colonial citizens - the missionaries. One statement by third world theologians present at the conference on 'The Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians' in Dar es Salaam, in August 1976, puts it as follows:

In the early phases of Western expansion the churches were allies of the colonial process. They spread under the protection of the colonial powers: they benefited from the expansion of Empire. In return they rendered special service to Western Imperialism by legitimising it and accustoming their new adherents to accept compensatory expectations of an eternal reward for terrestrial misfortunes, including colonial exploitation.²⁹

In Sierra Leone a very good example of the extent of this deep seated mistrust of early missions is evident in the treatment of the United Brethren in Christ (UBC) Mission in the North of the country. In 1898 the British colonial government imposed a tax on houses known as 'The Hut Tax'. The resulting protests by local rulers on the imposition of this tax, led to a rebellion known as 'The Hut Tax War'. The UBC missionaries in the area had vocally supported the tax. The locals then suspected them of being in league with the colonial government to undermine traditional authority, as well as to exploit the locals. As a result of this suspicion UBC mission stations in the area became particular targets for attack. Not only were several missionaries killed, but the mission stations were also destroyed.³⁰

However, things settled down, and suspicions and hostilities against the missionaries were minimised, because of the benefits to be accrued from such an interaction. Westermann noted that Christianity is a new ideal and a factor creating a new life. He made the following observation:

Because the African loves what the European offers him, he also loves Christianity, which in his eyes is the religion of the white man and part of his civilisation.³¹

The missions broadened religious conversion to incorporate such fields as church leadership, education, agriculture, and health. The CMS on its own initiative tried two schemes, both aimed at stimulating indigenous leadership in the church. One was the Auxiliary CMS, a local arm of the society. This was intended to encourage local support for the mission in terms of finance and personnel. The other was the Native Pastorate, a scheme launched by Henry Venn, to promote the notion of African self-reliance.³²

Samuel Whiton, an American visiting Sierra Leone from Liberia, summed up the missionary contribution to Sierra Leone very positively:

Sierra Leone is certainly a wonderful example of what can be accomplished through God's blessing on missionary labor. There are nearly a hundred churches, and more than twenty thousand church members in the colony. Sabbath and day schools are everywhere established; also academies, female seminaries and one college. Colored policemen patrol the streets, colored lawyers plead at the bar; colored pastors preach to colored audiences; and colored editors write for colored readers. The Sabbath is better observed in Sierra Leone than in many American cities. The people are regular in their attendance at the house of God, and reverential in their deportment. Of course there is much wickedness, but still the changes there have been wonderful.³³

The positive observations remarked upon by this observer were indeed chiefly so as a result of the activities of the missions, particularly the CMS and the Wesleyans. Not only did they establish schools, but they also gave the locals much scope for self enhancement.

Even though missionary influence receded with the upsurge of nationalism leading to independence in April 1961, the influence of Christianity has not waned. What has happened in the country is that Christianity has seen changes from the missionary period to a variety of Sierra Leonean responses.

4.A Informal education

Before Colonialism and the Missionary era in Sierra Leone, education was semi-formal and informal. This type of education was carried out not only by the immediate family, but involved the extended family, as well as the whole community. There was the apprenticeship system, where children learnt various trades by becoming an apprentice to experts in a chosen field. For instance, a boy could learn carpentry by helping with passing the tools to the carpenters, helping to saw planks of wood, and cleaning up the wood shavings. He then moved up to nailing and making small objects like a wooden cash box. When he mastered the small arts, he moved on to the next stage, and the next until he too became an expert. The length of time spent mastering the art would depend on the ability of the apprentice, as well as the teaching skills of the carpenter.

At home the child learnt about his cultural background and ancestry by listening to his elders recounting myths and stories about his ancestors, and the community. They were taught good manners as well as the codes of conduct consonant to the fostering of the well-being of the community. These moral codes of behaviour were further enhanced and formalised during puberty initiation. They also learnt creative expressions like dances, songs, and the rituals designed to maintain a favourable balance with the supernatural.

4.B Formal education

As mentioned above, formal education in Sierra Leone is primarily the result of Christian Missionary effort. When the missionaries came to Sierra Leone, they brought with them a formal system of education. As early as 1865, the census figure for education as analysed by Henry Venn of the CMS read: Sierra Leone had a school population of 22%. The comparable figure for Prussia was 16%, for England on 13%.³⁴ This formal system of education was destined to affect the Sierra Leonean on a phenomenal scale, that could not be equalled to anything he had ever experienced before. Even after Independence, and despite the considerable decline in missionary influence, this legacy is still very strong.

At first only primary schools were established in Sierra Leone. Then in 1845, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established the first secondary school in Freetown, known as the CMS Grammar School. This was the first secondary school established in the whole of West

Africa. The CMS also founded the Annie Walsh Memorial School for Girls in 1849. Sierra Leone, which was then a British Colony, became the centre of secondary education, not only for the colony, but also the interior and the rest of West Africa. Higher education was also first developed in Sierra Leone, as compared to other British Colonies. This was through the Fourah Bay Institute established by the CMS in 1827, to train local teachers and missionaries. It became affiliated to Durham University in England in 1876, with degrees being conferred. Sierra Leone was then regarded as 'The Athens of West Africa'.³⁵

Formal education has exerted a profound influence on the attitude and aspirations of Sierra Leoneans in a changing world. As Peil puts it:

The educational process increases pupils' knowledge of the outside world, and socialises them to accept changes in their way of life, and to desire achievement beyond the confines of their village.³⁶

For Sierra Leoneans who have acquired formal education there is no turning back. It becomes impossible to identify completely with, or return fully to, the former mode of life that was in existence before the advent of formal education. This change in attitude and aspirations is vividly portrayed by the early Krio settlers. The Krios who were known as the 'New Elite', were the first group in the country to embrace Christianity, Education, and Westernisation. Due to their privileged position on the one hand they saw themselves as superior to the other local ethnic groups. On the other hand, the other local ethnic groups despised them as descendants of slaves and 'strangers'. In the early days of colonialism the Krios used their education to re-evaluate, and take a keen interest in, the way they were governed by the British. They drafted and put their signatures to petitions and sent them to the British Parliament in England. They founded Newspapers like 'The Times' and the 'New Era' of the 1830s, and the 'Sierra Leone Weekly News' of 1884. In the petitions and newspapers, they published articles criticising the colonial government, and what they saw as the ills being propagated by them against the colony.

This led to the discomfort of the British colonial administrators, who started discriminating against them. The favourable positions they had held in the colonial administration were being undermined. For instance whereas in 1892 Krios held eighteen of the forty senior posts in the colonial administrative services, in 1912 they held only fifteen even though the service had increased to ninety-two.³⁷ So great was the dislike of the colonial officers of the Krios that observers like Sir Richard Burton and Sir Harry Johnston, after visiting Freetown

for only a few days: 'were ready to pontificate about African education being only a veneer through which latent savagery kept bursting'.³⁸ This hostility against the Krios was not just limited to the colonial officers, but included other Europeans and missionary associates as well. One missionary writer, Gustav Warneck, had this to say about Krio education: 'That it leads to academic degrees is very flattering to the black theologians, but not always favourable to the solidity of their education or to their humility'.³⁹

With the waning Krio influence some missions started establishing schools to cater for the provincial peoples. Albert Academy was established in 1904 for boys from the provinces who wanted to acquire secondary education. The assumption was that an educated 'Native', as opposed to the Krio, would prove less offensive to European sensitivities. But as Fyle reporting one Sierra Leonean's view noted:

Those Europeans who preferred the pliant obedience of unsophisticated natives to the pretensions of educated Creoles, would soon find themselves rearing a class of educated natives whose pretensions they would dislike quite as much.⁴⁰

Formal education was one tool which equipped the Sierra Leoneans, both provincials and Krios alike, to re-examine the values in both their own culture, and the newly acquired one. As the educated elite grew, so too did questions of participating in the political process of the country become more urgent. The result of this was the rising tide of nationalism leading to Sierra Leone becoming an Independent Nation in April 1961, and a Republic in April 1971.

Another significant development is that Sierra Leoneans have come to realise that formal education is an important tool for economic and social advancement. Since the late 1970s, therefore, schools are no longer owned by the missions, but are state controlled. Even Bible colleges, that are still mission controlled, have broadened their syllabuses to include secular subjects considered to be relevant for development.

5.A Urbanisation and migration

Urbanisation and the concomitant factor of migration is a normal and unavoidable phenomenon. The stimuli to migrate is created by two factors. On the one hand is the factor of changes within the environment. This includes economic considerations due to variations in opportunities that create an imbalance between the various local settings. On the other

hand are the changes brought about by the personal motives of the individual. This includes the desire for greater independence and social status. Both factors inevitably lead the individuals into the urban areas, which are the major recipients of funding, industries, and amenities.⁴¹

5.B Economic migration

The majority of people in Sierra Leone migrate for economic reasons.⁴² The migration pattern in the country is not unique to Sierra Leone but is found all over Africa. In the 1950s Africa became important as a supplier of some primary products as well as a market for imports from the industrialised countries. The effect of this was the conversion of the African societies to accommodate the new industrialised and monetary economy. The pattern of economic migration in the country has been for individuals or whole families, to move in search of money and better standards of living. Most migrants settle in the capital Freetown, or in the other big provincial towns.⁴³ They move to these areas because of employment opportunities, and the new ways of getting money as an alternative to the traditional system. Migration is encouraged because of the opening up of mines, the construction of new roads, public works, cash crops, and the opportunities of trading. Two to be highlighted here are mining and construction work.

Mining

Diamonds were first discovered in the Kono district in 1932.⁴⁴ Diamond mining has had a tremendous impact on the country's economy as the biggest revenue earner. This in turn has had an effect on the migration patterns. Before the Rebel war, diamonds alone were contributing sixty percent of total mineral export, exceeding by far the value of agricultural exports. The effects on agriculture have been very devastating; because of the promise of quick gains, many young and able bodied men move from their villages and agriculture to seek their fortunes in mining. Migration led to the increase of population in Kono at a rate not measured anywhere else in the country. For instance Koidu town in the Kono district by 1927, was a small settlement of ninety-six people (96). By 1963, it had grown very rapidly and had a population of eleven thousand, seven hundred and six people (11,706). By the time of the rebel attack on Kono in October 1992, the population of the town had more than trebled the figure of 1963.⁴⁵ Since Koidu town had become a booming urban centre, many

people flocked in to get rich quickly. Kono came to attract trade in livestock and other goods, with petty traders having the opportunity of becoming rich, as they could sell their wares at inflated prices. Songs and other artistic expressions convey the feelings of people during the diamond boom in the eighties. One such song 'Aunty Sally', narrates the story of a woman who had left her husband in Freetown on the pretext of going to a village, Shenge, to purchase some smoked fish. Instead of going to Shenge, she went to Kono and returned home with a 'diamond' (child) in her stomach.

Another important mining activity had been that carried out by Sierra Rutile and Sieromco for the rich iron ore and bauxite deposits in the country. Next to the diamond mines were these two mines accounting for a huge percentage of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The two companies provide employment for one fifth of the formal labour force. Again traders settled in the towns where they operated, because of the profits to be made. Even though the population in these two areas never reached the size of Kono, people flocked there seeking employment because of the pay structure. So popular was the belief that the mining areas were very wealthy that the two places were attacked by the Rebels in January 1995, thus depriving the country of much needed foreign exchange.

Construction

The pattern of economic migration is not limited to the mining areas alone. Between 1985 and 1987, the World Bank in association with OPEC funded a project for the construction and maintenance of feeder roads to the agricultural regions, and linking the neighbouring countries. In the major towns, where the bases were, about 90% of the labourers came from the surrounding villages.

Linked with the construction of good roads is also the improvement in means of transportation. As the various means of transportation become easier, so does the mobility of people. People move about trading, visiting relatives on short and long terms. The new economic opportunities created by the mobility of people, has reduced the mutual interdependence of members of the kin group. As a result, there are imbalances created in the villages. While the migration may ease the population in areas of high density, the land space created is not fully utilised by those remaining. This is either because they are too old, or disinterested in pursuing agriculture beyond the level of subsistency. The resultant effect

is that 90% of rice, the staple food, is imported. In cases where the migrants send money home, it does not boost the village economy in any significant way, as it is insufficient to compensate for their absence.⁴⁶ As the youths migrate some villages are left with a small and elderly population. Despite this, the need for *kabudu* still prevails among those left in the villages. Villagers fulfil this need by a high degree of co-operation, and a sharing of social institutions with adjacent villages.

5.C Education and migration

Surveys conducted by the Byerlee research team indicate that the young and educated are dominant in rural-urban migration.⁴⁷ Education plays a major role as it is regarded as one of the prime factors in satisfying many aspirations and goals. Even basic education raises the demands for better living conditions. So most young people move into the big towns in search of good schools and training facilities. Some educated people migrate in search of job opportunities that would increase their earning powers and social standing.⁴⁸ Others are sent by their parents or household heads to the urban areas, as wards to relatives and friends, so that they would receive education, and hopefully become an asset to the family. Education is a means of reinterpreting the traditional pattern of social stratification, based on age or descent, to one based on literacy. With education the earning power of the individual increases. With the increase in earning power some educated people see no reason why they should go back to the villages and submit to the authority of the elders, who are now their dependants. However, even when they stay in the urban areas, they send help to the villages.

5.D Social migration

For some people migration is the only means of holding on to a well-earned independence. Migration takes them away from the doldrums of village life, and the unsympathetic discipline of elders. They could earn and keep their money for themselves. Also because of the amenities and facilities to be enjoyed in the big towns that are not in their villages, some see no reason to go back. For instance most of the final year students at Fourah Bay College I had conversations with over a period of time would be very reluctant to go back to their villages and would rather settle in Freetown, or the big provincial towns, after completion of their studies. The reason for this is the lack of amenities, as well as the many financial and emotional pressures they say they would be subjected to once they return to their villages.

Others want to be free to have as many girlfriends as they like without having to be subjected to the restrictions imposed by the elders, violation of which could lead to fines and other sanctions. Also some are afraid of being bewitched by those who would be envious of their achievements. Some of my informants claim that those who do return, like the politicians, end up using their education to fleece their kinsfolk.⁴⁹

Some people move to the urban areas just for the adventure; this is particularly so with the youths. They are lured by the idea of the urban areas being modern and comfortable because of amenities like electricity, good roads, better health care facilities, and opportunities for making quick money. Modern communication and mass media have also accelerated the role of the urban areas as sources of innovation, so that they become an attraction for the villagers.⁵⁰ Many of the uneducated youths who migrate following this pattern succeed only in becoming delinquents (*rarray*). They organise themselves into street gangs, living on the streets; fighting, stealing, doing drugs, and generally involving themselves in crime. The girls often fall into prostitution, and end up having unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, with the result that children born out of this situation are more likely to end up deprived. In other words it becomes a vicious circle with no outlets for escaping.⁵¹

6.A Some individual responses to the factors of Modernity

To help in obtaining a comprehensive view of the above factors of Christianity, education, urbanisation and migration on the traditional values, I am going to present case studies of five individuals. I am aiming to find out how some individuals, particularly the educated, view their traditions. The educated are important as they are the ones most readily affected by modernity. They are also the vehicles for change in the villages, as people respect them. The first individual represents a response before the 1980s. The remaining four are drawn from individuals I interviewed on the particular subject in 1997 and 1998.⁵² Collectively, the five individuals are a reflection by extension of some of the responses of various, though not all, individuals to the factors of modernity.

First Individual

The first individual is Aiah Abu, who hails from Kono District in the Eastern Province. Aiah's grandfather was the paramount chief in the area in the early 1900s. He became a

Muslim when a Muslim leader (*karamokkho*) settled in his area. At his conversion, his household also became converted. At his death he was succeeded by his son, Aiah's uncle. In the 1930s his father, a devout Muslim, was opposed to any form of Western influence in that area. However, his brother, the paramount chief, through regular contact with the district officer and his representative took a somewhat different stance. He realised the importance of formal education, and so, even though he was a Muslim, he sent four of his sons to the Evangelical United Brethren School (EUB) at Jaiama, Kono district.

The paramount chief asked his brother, Aiah's father, to send him to the Western school, but he refused. He instead sent him to a Koranic school about twenty-five miles away in another village. When Aiah ran away from this school, the paramount chief, using his authority, decided he would send him to school without the knowledge or consent of his father. Whereas his father was opposed to the idea of him going to school, Aiah on the other hand was very excited about going. He says:

I was very happy when my uncle told me his plan as it was something new. Also, I had seen my cousins home on vacation with their nice clothes on. It only made sense that I too could wear those nice clothes if I went to the school with them. Besides, I assumed that I would not get whipped at the EUB school as I had at the Koranic school.⁵³

He started boarding school in 1947. In the school he was taught the Bible and the English language as the two main subjects in the curriculum. As he progressed he became caught up in a dilemma: on the one hand was his father and the traditional values he stood for, and on the other hand was Christianity and the Western values it represented. He had to make a choice between the two. He notes:

It did not take me long to realise that the school run by the EUB mission at Jaiama was totally different from the Koranic school I had recently run away from in Guinea.....It was not until years later that I understood why my father had actively opposed any contact with Europeans. Nor had I any idea when I arrived at the mission school that my father's worst fears - particularly with regard to the breakdown of traditional authority and the estrangement of son from father - were about to be realised, and that my schooling was to be a primary cause of much anguish.⁵⁴

As he progressed in the school, the more alienated he became from his traditional roots and religious values. When he went home on holidays and heard the Muslim call to prayer, his reaction was:

When I heard this call I remembered my life before going to the mission school, and it made me think how meaningless these early morning prayers were.⁵⁵

He goes on to acknowledge the fact that he did not make the conflict between him and his father any better. The longer he spent in the mission school the more reluctant he became about accepting his father's religion. He says that

When I told my father that I could not go to the mosque with him, I knew that our relationship had changed irrevocably, and from that moment on it went downhill.⁵⁶

This conflict between the old and the new, between the young and the old, was further epitomised by the events that took place in 1958. His uncle, the paramount chief, died, and his father's supposed succession got into conflict with his educated nephews, sons of the deceased. His father had this to say:

You see what education does to our children.....My own children fighting me and trying to prevent me from becoming the chief.⁵⁷

Second Individual

The following extracts is taken from an informal interview I had with Sento (not her real name) on 24th April 1997.

Sento hails from Kamabai in the Northern province. Her parents are both Muslim Limba. She attended both primary and secondary schools in Magburaka, before coming on to Freetown to do her sixth form and university education. In Freetown she attended the Annie Walsh Memorial School between 1977 - 1979, and Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, gaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1982. She is now married to a Christian Limba, and has a son. She and her husband live and work in Freetown.

Me: Sento why did you come to Freetown?

Sento: I was interested in going to university. Doing my sixth form in Freetown was to prepare me for my bigger ambition of going to university.

Me: Where did you stay when you first came to Freetown?

Sento: I stayed with my mother's sister, her husband and children.

Me: Are you an initiate of the *bondo* society?

Sento: Yes.

Me: When and where were you initiated?

Sento: I was initiated in December 1972, when I was twelve years old in Kamabai.

Me: If you have a daughter would you allow her to become an initiate?

Sento: There is no way I will allow that. You see I had a terrible time in the *bondo* bush. I nearly bled to death after the operation. Instead of taking me to the hospital immediately, I

was accused of witchcraft. They finally took me to the hospital, where I was cured. It was a terrible experience, I don't even want to think about it.

Me: Does that mean you are against female circumcision?

Sento: Well! It is culture. But my experience makes me afraid of what will happen to my child. In any case I may not have a daughter, and that will solve the problem.

Me: What does your mother say about your decision?

Sento: She does not know. That is why I do not want you using my name. As far as she is concerned I am in line with them. When I go to the provinces I participate in *bondo* rituals. They do not know my stance, and not knowing does no harm to any of us.

Me: What were your parents' reactions to you marrying a Christian?

Sento: The opposition was not great, as he is also a Limba.

Me: Did you have a traditional or Christian marriage?

Sento: The engagement was done in Kamabai and that was traditional. The marriage took place in Freetown. We went to the mosque first, and after the mosque ceremony we went to the church.

Me: Did you observe any birth rites for your son?

Sento: I carried some objects during pregnancy, just the usual stones and a knife. I had him in a private hospital, but his placenta was buried by my mother who came to stay with us just before I had him. During the naming ceremony we poured libations to the ancestors, and both Christian and Muslim prayers were said. We also gave him one Christian⁵⁸ and one Limba name.

Me: Would you go to a diviner?

Sento: If I feel threatened by witches, or if I am ill and the hospital cannot cure me, I will definitely go to one.

Me: Are there other people in your household?

Sento: My two younger sisters are with us, as well as my husband's brother.

Me: Is Freetown now home for you?

Sento: Definitely. We both have good jobs here in Freetown. Also for the sake of our son's schooling it is best if we stay here.

Me: Have you kept in touch with the rest of your extended family in the provinces?

Sento: When I had my son my mother stayed for over six months. Even now my mother and the rest of the family are free to visit us anytime. We also visit them, and send money and other help on a regular basis.

Third Individual

The following is from an informal interview I had with Fatu in London on 7th April 1998, followed on with a telephone conversation to her in London on 8th November 1998.

Fatu hails from Makeni in the Northern province. Her parents, both dead, were Muslim Temnes. She attended St Joseph's Convent, the Roman Catholic Girls school in Makeni. She came to Freetown after completing her second year of schooling in Makeni. She attended the Freetown Secondary School for Girls in Freetown, unto the sixth form level. In 1988, she left for further studies in London, where she now lives. She is a Christian, married to a Christian Krio. They have a son and a daughter.

Me: Why did you come to Freetown?

Fatu: Better education. The GCE results in Freetown were always better than those in the provinces.

Me: Whom did you stay with in Freetown?

Fatu: First my father's girlfriend, then my step-mother.

Me: Are you an initiate of the *bondo* society?

Fatu: Yes.

Me: When and where were you initiated?

Fatu: I was initiated in Makeni, in 1974 when I was ten years old.

Me: Would you allow your daughter to become an initiate?

Fatu: Why should I put my child through such punishment?

Me: But it is culture.

Fatu: It is not culture but ignorance. Why did they remove what I need? I need it, but they took it away from me without my consent. We were all brainwashed. They should have waited a few more years, and I would have refused.

Me: Are they aware of your feelings on this issue?

Fatu: The elders pretend not to understand my point of view.

Me: But in Freetown you were participating in *bondo* rituals.

Fatu: Just to avoid conflicts, not whole-heartedly.

Me: When did you become a Christian?

Fatu: I knew I would be a Christian when I was nine years old.

Me: How come?

Fatu: I was in a boarding school in Makeni. My mother died when I was young, so during the holidays I spent part of it in Makeni with my father and step-mother. The other part I

spent in Freetown with my father's girlfriend. She was a Christian Krio. She was a very lovely lady, who loved me as her own, unlike my step-mother. I loved her and her religion. So when Scripture Union visited my school it was not difficult for me to convert.

Me: How did your father react?

Fatu: He made no fuss, but my step-mother who was a *Haja* (had been on a pilgrimage to Mecca), was very upset. She called me a rebel, and treated me as one.

Me: As a Christian living in a Muslim home, did you have to make compromises?

Fatu: To show respect and avoid friction, I was taking part in various sacrifices, but deep down I never believed.

Me: Were your relations opposed to your choice of partner?

Fatu: There is no way they could have stopped me, as I got married in London.

Me: Did you observe any traditions?

Fatu: The engagement was a bit traditional. My uncle and aunt were in London for a visit. My husband got one of his relatives to pay them a visit with the request for my hand. They had to go through some of the traditional processes. When my uncle and aunt returned home they took the message to the other relatives. They also had to visit my husband's family for the first time in Freetown.

Me: Did you observe any birth rites.

Fatu: No. We were under no family pressure to do so. Had we been back home we would have yielded to family pressure. But here the decision was entirely ours.

Me: Have you kept in touch with your extended family in Sierra Leone?

Fatu: Yes. I cannot abandon them. They are a vital part of me. In fact, now that I am here, I appreciate them even more. I miss that sense of belonging and unity. In crisis I was always surrounded by a lot of people. I was never alone. I miss them so much, sometimes I find it depressing.

Me: But you have your husband and children.

Fatu: I know, but it is not right for you to have just the nuclear family. You need the support of the extended as well.

Me: Do you have ways of coping?

Fatu: Our home is always opened to our friends here in London. The children feel so relaxed when we have visitors. Some of our friends we now consider to be relatives. We also go home on holidays whenever we can.

Fourth Individual

The following is from an informal interview I had with James on 28th April 1997.

James hails from Freetown. His mother is a Krio, and his father a Mende Christian. Both parents were raised in Freetown. James was born in Freetown, and attended school in Freetown. He attended the Albert Academy unto the fifth form level. He then did his sixth form at the Sierra Leone Grammar School between 1978-1980. He then went on to Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, where he graduated with a bachelor of science degree in 1984. He is married to a Mende Christian. They have a son and a daughter.

Me: James are you an initiate of any secret society?

James: You should not be asking that question.

Me: Why?

James: You should know that most men belong to one secret society or the other. But I am not prepared to discuss this with you.

Me: Okay. But, tell me, would you allow your son to go through circumcision rites?

James: Do you know of any uncircumcised males in the country?

Me: Let's change the topic. Did you have a traditional wedding?

James: The engagement was done at my wife's parents in the provinces. That bit was traditional. The wedding was in a church in Freetown.

Me: What about birth rites for your children?

James: My son was born outside wedlock. As a sign of respect for my parents, even though me and my wife were living together as boyfriend and girlfriend, the naming ceremony was done at my parents' house. The ceremony was a combination of traditional and Christian rites, libation was made to the ancestors, and Christian prayers were said. My daughter's was also a combination of traditional and Christian, but because we were married by then it was held at our house. Both children have Christian and Mende names.

Me: Why did you not wait until after marriage to live with your girlfriend and have children?

James: I had to be sure we could have children, and that our marriage will succeed.

Me: But this is against tradition.

James: I owe it to my mother in particular to make sure the person I marry will respect her, and I had to give her grandchildren.

Me: So did you chose your wife, or did your mother chose her?

James: I did.

Me: How will you describe your relationship with your mother?

James: I love and respect her. She comes first and my wife knows that.

Me: What about the rest of your extended family?

James: My wife's younger sister stays with us. When her parents come from the provinces they are free to stay with us. In fact when the rebel war escalated, her parents along with my wife's brother and two sisters came to Freetown, and stayed with us for almost a year. Generally, we try to keep in touch with the extended family, as well as with our good friends.

Fifth Individual

The following is from an informal interview I had with Momoh on 2nd May 1997. Momoh hails from Kamabai. His parents are Christian Limba, who still live in Kamabai. Momoh came to Freetown in September 1992, after completing secondary schooling, and in search of a job. At the moment he is working in an accounting office, while doing a part-time course in accounting at the Institute of Public Administration and Management. Momoh is hoping to pursue a career in accountancy, up to the level of chartered accountancy. Momoh is single.

Me: Where did you stay when you first came to Freetown?

Momoh: I stayed with my cousin and his wife, but only for two months.

Me: Why not longer?

Momoh: Once I got the job, I felt it was time to move and be independent.

Me: Are you living alone?

Momoh: No, I live with two other friends in a three bedrooms house. We share the rent.

Me: Are your friends also from Kamabai?

Momoh: No, I just met the one at the office where I work, and the other is a friend of his.

Me: Seeing that you had not been to school in Freetown was it difficult finding a job?

Momoh: No, my uncle is the senior accountant of the firm.

Me: Are you a member of *gbangbani*?

Momoh: Yes.

Me: If you have children will they be initiated?

Momoh: If I have sons they will be initiated, but not daughters.

Me: Why?

Momoh: Initiating boys is a status thing. It gives us prestige, power and influence in the society. With daughters it will be different, as what happens in their society is not scientifically viable.

Me: Do you have a girlfriend?

Momoh: Yes.

Me: Is she also from Kamabai?

Momoh: No she is a Krio from Freetown.

Me: What are your parents reactions to this?

Momoh: They are very angry. It is causing a lot of tension between us, but I have to live my own life, and make my own decisions.

Me: Do you keep in touch with your relatives in Kamabai?

Momoh: I do not go home regularly because of the conflict I have with my parents over my girlfriend, but I do send things for them on a regular basis.

Me: Do you take part in traditional rituals.

Momoh: Whenever I go home, I have to be bathed by my uncle who is a diviner. I take part in sacrifices to the ancestors, and in *gbangbani* rituals. But I also attend the Wesleyan church with my parents.

Me: Why do you have to be bathed?

Momoh: I do it to please my parents. They believe that the liquid used to bathe me protects me against witchcraft attacks, and opens doors for me to be successful.

Me: You say you do it for your parents. What about for yourself?

Momoh: I am not totally convinced, but I have to do it out of respect rather than a firm conviction. In any case it does no harm to please them sometimes.

Me: Is that not a double standard?

Momoh: So what? We all do it. When we are with our elders we behave differently from when we are with are our age-group.

Me: Do you intend settling down in Freetown?

Momoh: I will wait and see what opportunities I have after finishing my course.

6.B *The effects of Modernity on the traditional values*

As already mentioned, the five individuals dealt with above represent by extension the responses of various people, particularly the educated, to the factors of modernity. Factors which cause the traditional values to be modified, and extended, as new values are

incorporated and adapted to suit a changing society. I will now use the conversations with the five to exemplify the effects of modernity on the traditional values. Kenneth Little rightly observes;

African social change and transformation might be seen as an historical process of adaptation to new conditions of life and labour. The new conditions of life and labour are directly linked to the industrial economy of the West, as well as, other factors of Western contact like the missionary influence. This new system has extended the traditional scale of community into a more extensive social system that goes beyond the traditional imagination. It has become a part of the world society. The new society with its specialist models in terms of its institutions and the individuals who constitute it are creating a larger variety of new social groupings and networks than in the traditional system.⁵⁹

In this context, as exemplified by the five individuals in the case studies, people are given the opportunity of re-evaluating traditional values in the light of the acquired ideals and values. This in turn causes them to desire and accept changes beyond the confines of the traditional system. As a result the traditional institutions become modified, new cultural values and technology are adapted. As the social and religious are indivisible, what affects the social also affects the religious tradition of the people.

6.C The effect on the Traditional religion

The traditional religion in its original form has by far been affected the most by the factors of modernity. In the urban areas there is a rise in conversion to Christianity and Islam, while at the same time there are allowances made which permit the converts to adopt aspects of the traditional religion into the new faith. Some individuals, like the five in modern day Sierra Leone, have not had the crisis situation of passing over from the traditional religion to either Christianity or Islam. This choice had already been made for them by their parents. As in the case of Aiah and Fatu, the disturbance of focus arises when they made the conscious choice of not embracing their parents' choice of the Islamic religion, but rejecting it for Christianity. In the case of Sento, it becomes a matter of synchronising both.

It is also difficult, if not impossible, to capture the traditional religion in its original form, as consciousness of symbolism diminishes, either because the symbols are no longer in existence, or simply because the old ways have to be replaced with the new. It is not unusual for the younger generation to keep asking their elders about what were the various symbols, and why they were used for certain rituals.

However, for the professing Christian or Muslim, even though the traditional religion might not provide the key to every life situation, it has not completely died out. It is sometimes reinvented in the new, or practised alongside the new, with modifications. This is very evident in crisis and other situations when a religion like missionary Christianity does not have the apparatus to help, people revert to the traditional practices. All of the five individuals above have participated or still participate in traditional rituals, like sacrifices and libations to the ancestors. Momoh in particular talks about having to go through a bathing ritual whenever he goes home on a visit. The reverting to traditional rituals tends to be widespread in the country. For instance, in January 1985 somebody I knew became terminally ill with cancer. He went to the minister of the church he was attending, to pray for his recovery. Not only did the minister pray for him, but he also advised him to visit a diviner to have protective charms prepared.

The diviner still features in Sierra Leone, although not as prominently as before, simply because now they have to share their territory of prescribing remedies with the numerous prayer groups, and medical clinics which are emerging. A visit to the diviner, and the offering of sacrifices, is still deemed relevant by some Sierra Leoneans. Those who feel that their Christianity is not compatible with the traditional views, visit the diviner at night or in secret. For instance, I grew up in a large compound with eight household groupings. In one of the groupings was a diviner. It was of interest to us as youngsters to spy on those who visited him. One lady we used to observe was a Christian lady of very high standing. She was always driven to the diviner by a driver, who would park the car in one of the side streets leading to the diviner's compound. The lady would then go in, always using the back entrance. That way it was impossible for an outsider to tell whom she was visiting. We never got to find out why she was visiting the diviner, but some of her prescribed rituals included the sacrificing of a live sheep and ritual bathing in our wash house by the diviner himself.

Another visitor was a neighbour, who was a church official in one of the mainline churches. She started visiting when her daughter became very ill. The daughter was first admitted in the hospital. When her condition did not improve, her mother started taking her to the diviner. One of her own prescribed rituals included her bringing a banana stem to the diviner at dawn one Sunday morning. After this she proceeded to attend and serve in her church as usual.

The ancestral beliefs and practices have been incorporated into Christianity. The ancestors are still part of their families, and ties with them must be maintained. For instance, it is not unusual during the naming ceremony of a Christian child for prayers to be offered to God, and libations be poured to the ancestors, as the individuals mentioned above attest.

6.D *The effect on the family*

The combined effect of missionary activity and urbanisation have had less effect on family life, than would have been expected. The family and kinship continue to be very important factors in all levels of society. There have been some modifications to allow the development of the nuclear family as a unit within the extended family unit. The traditional function of the family pulling its resources together is still practised, albeit the purposes have been modified and extended. This is important in dealing with the issues that the nuclear family cannot handle alone, either because of economic or other social constraints. For example for a marriage ceremony, or for an individual pursuing further studies, the extended family has to contribute financial and moral support to protect their family name. The importance of the family and kinship is also evident as in the example of the five individuals and the respect they show to their elders, and the unwillingness to allow conflicts to sever relationships. Individuals like Momoh would rather stay away from home than incur the displeasure and continuous tensions of his extended family in the provinces. Like him, some individuals in this regard will make a conscious distinction between the way they behave among their elders as opposed to acceptable behaviour among peers.

The five lend credence to Byerlee's survey that most migrants maintain full or partial links with their home villages, providing regular or occasional support.⁶⁰ Some even migrate with every intention of returning home in due course, but as their material interests and values become adapted to the changing society, and with the increased pressure created by the demand for more financial assistance, they stay away permanently. This is why Sento is very definite about staying permanently in Freetown. Her family enjoys opportunities and facilities that would have been denied them if they had chosen to settle in the provinces. Added to the fact of a better lifestyle in the urban areas, some migrants who return on visits on some occasions only succeed in propagating and enhancing the pattern of migration by their lavish lifestyle and by the colourful picture they paint of life in the urban area. This

results sometimes in several more of the family migrating to be with their kinsmen in the big cities.

As already noted in the urban areas links with the family and kingroup in the provinces generally are not completely severed. There are ties still existing between members of the same family and village. The new development is that the kinship group has now been extended to incorporate new members through association, so that a close friend might become regarded as family. However, as the scale of interaction increases, so the level of intimacy diminishes. Social encounters tend to become more casual, such as renting rooms in the same house, or supporting the same football team. This is the case of Momoh, who is staying in a rented house with two other friends, one of whom he met at work and the other through the one he met at work. The other three individuals also indicate that their family circle now includes some of their friends. Sometimes family interaction becomes limited to occasions like weddings, funerals, and other social and religious occasions. On occasions like these, there is the opportunity of meeting new kin members and updating oneself on the activities of others. Sometimes on occasions like these the contributions received, especially money, could assume predominance over the actual form and significance of the ceremony. Once the actual meaning is lost, it is never regained.⁶¹

6.E *The effect on marriage*

Marriage is another institution that has been affected by modernity. Marriage is now mostly by mutual consent as opposed to arranged marriages. However, it still involves the family and community, albeit to a lesser extent than arranged marriages between two families. In the urban areas where intermarriage is on the increase, as in the case of James and Fatu, it is not uncommon for the relatives of both sides to be completely unknown by the respective parties concerned, until just before or after the marriage ceremony. This shifts the emphasis to more of individual than group basis.

Conversations with some of my educated lady acquaintances reveal that, having been exposed to the western concept of monogamous marriages, they do not want to settle down in a polygamous marriage.⁶² Even those who are Muslims prefer monogamy, and when polygamy becomes unavoidable, they prefer to be the senior wife, and their homes must be separate and far away from those of co-wives. As the educated aspire to the Western way of

life, it is no longer uncommon to have two wedding ceremonies for a couple; one the traditional, followed by a church wedding with Western costumes, reception, and honeymoon, as attested to by the interviewees in the case studies. As the proportion of the educated increases, some delay marriage in pursuit of a career, or a suitable partner. The social anthropologist, Michael Bourdillon, argues that change in society is influenced by a person's ideals and material interests. This is evident in Sierra Leone where men have to work very hard to make sure they secure a well paid job, which in turn influences the changing values of society.⁶³ There was a song in the late 1980s depicting this. The song '*You lef me pan poh*', tells the sad tale of a poor husband abandoned by his wife for somebody rich. As fate would have it, he became very wealthy later on, and the wife wanted to return home. In the song he reminds her that she had abandoned him when he was poor, and should not expect him to take her back now that fortune had smiled on him. More recently in 1994/5, the youthful army government (NPRC) became very popular, driving flashy cars and owning great wealth. It became the vogue for ladies to apply bleaching chemicals to their face and all over their body, as it was believed that light skinned women would be more attractive to them. Those with bleached skins became referred to as 'NPRC first colour'. Some of them did succeed in getting married or becoming attached to some of the NPRC government ministers, thereby creating a rise in the young aspirants with bleached skins.

As in the case of the individuals in the case studies, more and more educated Sierra Leoneans, and those who live in the urban areas, are beginning to see nothing wrong in breaking ethnic norms by getting married to somebody of their choice, albeit from a different ethnic group or religious affiliation. However, children are still considered to be very important in the society, and people go to all lengths to have children, even if they stay single. So important are children in the country that in some ways it weakens traditional norms and sanctions. According to traditional codes, sex before marriage is prohibited, particularly for the young ladies, with punishments being imposed. Now some men, as in the case of James mentioned above, prefer sex before marriage. The argument being, how can they tell the marriage will be fruitful if they do not have sex and children before.

6.F The effects of change on the puberty rituals

Formal education seems to be a very important factor in the modifications occurring in the traditional ideal of *kabudu*, as in the case of Aiah. It influences the attitudes and aspirations of the recipients. This in turn makes the recipients the vehicles of change in the community. Most individuals, particularly the youths who migrate from their villages into the urban areas, do so for educational reasons. The migration increases the number of people they interact with. With this interaction goes the increase in their knowledge and skills, and therefore, in their power to shape society. Some youths use their acquired education to refute tradition as irrational, unscientific and superstitious. This results in moral conflicts and diffusion of values leading to a situation of 'perspectives in collision' between the modern and the traditional.⁶⁴ For instance, in Kamabai, discussions were held on the cholera epidemic mentioned on page 40 of this thesis. During the discussions the elders voiced their conviction that the dream about the epidemic being due to the displeasure of the ancestors was quite true. A sacrifice was to be held to appease them. Some youths on holidays disagreed with this conviction. For them the epidemic was caused by the lack of good general hygiene. All that was needed was the cleaning up of the town, and education of the people about good personal hygiene. In my discussions with some of the youths after the meeting, they were all in agreement that their elders never give satisfactory explanations to occurrences. The response of the elders, according to the youths, is always that 'it is the tradition, tradition dictates and we comply'.

Nowhere is the modification and expansion more evident than in the *bondo* rituals for girls at puberty. The *bondo* society used to be a vital facet in the establishment and maintenance of the traditional ideal of *kabudu*. It was the female institution responsible for training and equipping girls to fit 'safely' into the society. The *bondo* rites promoted the identity and solidarity of its members.⁶⁵ Now educated female Sierra Leoneans are beginning to question its relevance, with particular reference to the aspect of circumcision. There are newspaper articles now appearing condemning the practice as 'evil' and irrelevant. The arguments are that most of the initial purposes of female circumcision have been lost, along with the accompanying rituals and celebrations. The educational functions have all but disappeared as the training period diminishes, due to education and urbanisation. It is no longer preparatory for marriage, as most of the initiates return to school after initiation. The factors of family honour, virginity, chastity and purity are all losing credence. It is also considered

now to be counterproductive to keep girls in the bush incurring huge financial burden in feeding and maintaining them and the crowds. The idea that initiation marks an important step into adulthood is no longer tenable as girls are initiated not at puberty but younger.⁶⁶ An interesting recent development is that men could now acquire license to perform the operation on young girls in their clinics. This symbolises the changing pattern with the *bondo* ritual losing its relevance as the only place where the female dominates in an otherwise male controlled society.⁶⁷

The arguments being put forward, it should be noted, are by the educated who have been through the ritual themselves. They are joined by those who should, but are refusing to be initiated. The feeling is that there are now new associations which fulfil similar social functions, without circumcision. They say that while the rich Sierra Leonean culture is to be preserved, aspects that have lost their significance and are now deemed to be a health and psychological hazard must be scrapped. In the light of this they have formed the Sierra Leone Association On Women's Welfare (SLAWW), a branch of the Inter-Africa Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IACHTP). Apart from organising workshops and seminars, SLAWW has also brought together some *bondo* elders (*Sowes*) to educate them on the dangers of their profession, and to help them find alternatives. The result has been the formation of the Sowe Alternative Project (SAP). SLAWW has trained over thirty *Sowes* in different income generating skills, and equipped them with some capital to compensate for the loss of economic gain they were acquiring from their profession. One *sowe* is reported as saying: 'I am happy that these people have shown me the door to civilisation. With the skills I have acquired, I can now live a better life with my family. I therefore, see no reason going back to my old profession'.⁶⁸

The government of Sierra Leone has itself approved a twenty-year programme proposal for the eradication of female circumcision. This proposal is based on two areas: Health education to increase the knowledge of the dangers involved with the practice, and to correct wrong religious beliefs. The second area is the provision of health care facilities to provide treatment and rehabilitation for the victims of female circumcision.⁶⁹ It should be noted however, that male puberty rites, have not been criticised to the same extent as the female rituals. Adherence to the male rituals is firmly expected, and subscribed to.

7. Conclusion of the chapter

As can be seen from this chapter, the encounter between the traditional ideals of *kabudu* and those of modernity is modifying and widening certain traditional features as they adopt and adapt to modernity. In this process the traditional religion, as a religion in its own right, continues to recede and is being replaced by the universal religions, particularly Christianity and Islam. Yet, this by no means indicates the demise of the practices and rituals associated with the traditional religion. These are now being adopted and adapted by practitioners of the universal religions, particularly in crisis situations. In the same vein, the other values and norms of the traditional ideal of *kabudu* are being modified and extended. Particularly for the educated and the migrants, there is the creation of a larger variety of new social groupings and networks than in the traditional system. Locally derived criteria of acceptable norms and patterns of behaviour are being extended into more broadly based criteria. New values and norms of behaviour partially replace, or co-exist alongside, the traditional ones. Now individuals have to make a distinction between acceptable behaviour among elders, and that among peers. Yet whether some traditional norms, values and institutions are being rejected and new ones adopted, or whether the existing ones are being modified and extended to suit the contemporary context, the overriding need for *kabudu*, that deep need for belonging, still prevails.

¹ Eliade, M. (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol. 10, London & New York: Macmillan, 1987, pp.18-19.

² Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p. 216.

³ Walls, A.F. 'Primal Religious Traditions in Today's World', in F. Whaling, (ed.), *Religion in Today's World*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987, pp. 266-7.

Walls, A.F. *The Missionary Movement In Christian History*, Maryknoll, New York & Edinburgh: Orbis Books & T&T Clark, 1996, pp. 130-1.

⁴ Another writer, M.F.C. Bourdillon, also sees change in traditional ideals and values as inevitable. In the process the traditional systems of belief lose some credibility. They are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of supporters, who now need something with a broader base to help them cope with global issues. See M. Bourdillon, *Where are the Ancestors?*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 1993, p.77.

⁵ Walls, A.F. 'Primal Religious Traditions', pp. 267-278, & *The Missionary Movement*, pp. 131-139.

⁶ *ibid.* p.269, & p.132.

⁷ Johnstone, P. *Operation World*, Carlisle: Operation Mobilisation Publishing, 5th edition 1993, reprinted 1997.

⁸ Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.29-30.

⁹ *Target 2000 Evangelistic and Church Survey Research Programme*, Freetown: EFSL Publication, 1990, p.3.

¹⁰ Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.27.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.27.

¹² *ibid.*, p.30.

¹³ The Nova Scotians were not the first settlers to come to Freetown. There had been some settlers from England who had succumbed to the climate earlier on.

¹⁴ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.37.

¹⁵ Sanneh, L. *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, Great Britain: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1983, p.69.

¹⁶ Walls, A.F. 'The Nova Scotian Settlers and their Religion', *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, 1 June 1959, pp. 19-31.

¹⁷ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.55.

¹⁸ Harry Sawyerr has done extensive research on this subject. They include the following published in *The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*: 'Graveside Libations In and Near Freetown', Vol. 7 (2), 1965, p.48f. 'Two Short Libations', Vol. 9 (1), 1967, p.34f. 'A Sunday Graveside Libation in Freetown After a Bereavement', Vol. 9 (2), 1967, p.41f. The first article is about a lady visiting the graveside of her uncle. Her requests included guidance in her petty trading, and protection against sudden accidents and sickness. The second article involves a family group, at the father's graveside, asking for peace to prevail at home, and for guidance for one of their members going abroad for the first time. The third article involves an extended family gathering at the graveside of a recently bereaved relative. The libation was a sign of formal farewell to the deceased, as well as to speed him on his journey.

¹⁹ Herskovits, M.J. *The Human Factor in Changing Africa*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, p.177.

²⁰ Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.19.

²¹ The freed slaves became known as the Krios. No other ethnic group in the country could match their zeal for Christianity, and Westernisation.

²² Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.38.

²³ Sanneh, L. *West African Christianity*, p.60.

²⁴ *ibid.*, for details of conflicts between the two missionaries, which included their quarrelling violently so that great crowds used to gather outside their house to listen. One of the two missionaries, Peter Hartwig, later abandoned the missionary vocation for slave trading.

²⁵ Olson, G.W. *Church Growth in Sierra Leone*, Michigan: Algonac, 1969, p.34.

²⁶ Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.47. Sanneh, L. *West African Christianity*, p.67.

²⁷ Sanneh, L. *ibid.* p.60.

²⁸ Herskovits, *The Human Factor*, p.179.

²⁹ Parratt, J. (ed.) *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, New edn., London: SPCK, 1997, p.3.

³⁰ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.533.

³¹ Westermann, D. *Africa and Christianity*, p.28.

³² Sanneh, L. *West African Christianity*, p.64.

³³ Walls, A.F. 'Meditations Among The Tombs: Changing Patterns of Identity in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in S. McGrath, et al, (eds.), *Rethinking African History*, Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1997, p.490.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Fyle, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.74.

³⁶ Peil, M. & Sada, P.O. *African Urban Societies*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1984, p.126.

³⁷ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.615.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.616.

³⁹ Walls, A.F. 'Meditations Among The Tombs', p.489.

⁴⁰ Fyfe, C. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.616.

⁴¹ Byerlee, D. et al, 'Rural - Urban Migration in Sierra Leone: Determinants and Policy Implications', *African Rural Economy Paper*, Michigan, USA, Michigan State University, No. 13, 1976, p. 1f.

⁴² *ibid.* p.6-10.

⁴³ Freetown has the highest population of migrants, followed by the mining area of Kono. See Byerlee, et al, 'Rural-Urban Migration', p.25. A point to note is that because of the civil unrest in the country migration patterns are a bit chaotic, as people move to wherever they think is safe.

⁴⁴ Fyfe, C.M. *History of Sierra Leone*, p.134.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.135. It is difficult to get official figures as over a third of the population are engaged in illicit mining, and therefore do not take part in official censuses.

⁴⁶ Byerlee, et al, 'Rural-Urban Migration', p.98.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* p.28-9, 46, 97.

⁴⁸ The survey reveals that migrants in urban areas regard the availability of social amenities such as schools, hospitals and water supply as significant benefits of migration. Byerlee, p.108.

⁴⁹ Informal conversations with the 1986/87, 1990/91 and 1994/95, finalists of the theology department at FBC, about what they intended to do once they finished their studies.

⁵⁰ Byerlee, et al, 'Rural-Urban Migration', pp. 2ff.

⁵¹ *Bras, Greens and Ballheads: Interviews with Freetown 'Street boys'*, Freetown: People's Educational Association of Sierra Leone, 1989, p.7f.

⁵² All conversations were in Creole, and were translated into English by the researcher.

⁵³ Abu, A. 'Islam versus Christianity in Sierra Leone' in Berman, E.H. *African reactions to missionary education*, New York: Teachers College, 1975, p.102.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.96.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.108.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* p.110.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.110.

⁵⁸ Christian name does not necessarily imply biblical names, but European or non-African names.

⁵⁹ Little, K. *West African Urbanisation*, Cambridge: CUP, 1965, p.85.

⁶⁰ ByerLee, et al, 'Rural-Urban Migration', p.98.

⁶¹ See Bourdillon, *Where are the ancestors?*, p.77. He identifies four interrelated factors: Habit, Material Interests, Power and Control, and Ideals and Values as influencing peoples behaviour, and the direction in which society would go. The four ways are always likely to be present in varying degrees in influencing the patterns of behaviour that develop.

⁶² I have observed, taken part in discussions, and overheard educated girls talking about their preferences for husbands. One particular discussion was held on the evening of 20 May 1992. My niece Miatta Kabba, a college student, and four of her college friends were visiting at my house. The discussion started with one of the girls whose mother was experiencing problems in a polygamous home. All the girls were in unison that they will never tolerate polygamy or concubinage.

⁶³ Bourdillon, M. *Where are the ancestors?*, p.15.

⁶⁴ Mazrui, A. *The African*, Toronto: Little Brown & Co., 1986, p.247-257. Mazrui discusses some of the issues involved in a collision of perspectives due to modernity. He says that not only does this situation lead to clashes between the traditional and modern, but it also alters

the African social landscape. The result is that the African continent is no longer at ease morally; no longer sure what is correct behaviour.

⁶⁵ See chapter two of this thesis.

⁶⁶ Koso-Thomas, O. *The Circumcision of Women: A Strategy for Eradication*, London: Zed, 1987, p.61. Olayinka Koso-Thomas is one of the advocates for the eradication of female circumcision. She is herself not an initiate, but a medical practitioner. In the course of her work she has dealt with a number of traumatic cases due to female circumcision.

⁶⁷ *Weekend Spark*, July 28 1995, carried an article about a man Patrick Tarawallie. He is recognised by the government, and has a certificate giving him authority to carry out female circumcision. The *sowes* were protesting that it was not according to customary rites.

⁶⁸ 'How Women Suffer Silently', *For di People*, May 16, 1996, p.2.

⁶⁹ 'Female Circumcision in Africa: An Overview', in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 28 (1), March 1985, p.108.

Chapter Four

Politics in Sierra Leone under the All Peoples' Congress Party

1. *The Argument*

The factors of modernity described in chapter three are not unique to Sierra Leone, but are common to nearly all African societies. In addition to the described factors, as this chapter will show, is the situation that applies specifically to Sierra Leone, in the form of political corruption. It will be argued in this chapter that between 1961 - 1992, the country experienced a vicious circle of political corruption with the resultant effect of the civil and political unrest, chiefly perpetrated by the rebels. To be examined is the process of corruption under the All Peoples' Congress government (APC), to ascertain whether it is a reasonable conclusion that years of corruption, warfare and atrocities have produced a severe strain on the society, which in turn has led to a sense of *kabudu* being under threat. We noted in chapter one that the traditional ideal of *kabudu* prescribes that individuals are corporate beings. As a corporate being individual aspirations and goals must equally promote the well-being of other individuals within the society. In this chapter the examination of the politics of corruption will be a demonstration of how a deviation from other-centred goals can be devastating on the well-being of society on the whole. The argument is that the politics of corruption as a structure, instituted by the APC, failed to enhance the well-being of the individuals within the society. In this respect *kabudu* ideals have been threatened, and the society as a whole has suffered.

2. *Background to the formation of the All Peoples' Congress Party*

As already mentioned, Sierra Leone, which then consisted of Freetown and the surrounding Peninsula area, was founded by the British as home for freed slaves in 1787. This area became a British Crown Colony in January 1808. The hinterland was added to the colony to form the present day country of Sierra Leone in 1896.¹ British rule was to last until 27th April 1961, when Sierra Leone became an independent nation. Like any other political system there were reasons for discontentment with Colonial rule. But the discontent found expression in only short lived riots and rebellions like the Hut Tax War of 1898, the anti-Syrian riots of 1919 and the Railway Workers Union Strike of 1926.²

A very significant step in terms of Sierra Leonean participation in politics, and the beginning of an end to colonialism, was the Stevenson Constitution. Governor Hubert Stevenson, the then Governor of Sierra Leone made constitutional proposals in 1947. The constitution was adopted in 1951. According to the constitution the twelve district councils in the protectorate were to elect one member each to the Legislative Council and two to the Protectorate Assembly, and Colony constituencies were to elect seven members. This new constitution was a welcome change to that of 1863, by which only four nominated unofficial members, three being Africans from the Colony sat in the Legislative Council.³

The locals were now given the mandate to organise themselves into political parties. The protectorate peoples formed the 'Sierra Leone Peoples' Party' (SLPP), under the leadership of Sir Milton Margai. The Colony politicians formed a Krio-based party, 'The National Council Of Sierra Leone' (NCSL). Elections were held in 1951, in which the SLPP won with a clear majority. Members of the SLPP were then chosen by the Colonial government to sit in a newly constituted Executive Council. The Executive Council retained the Governor and four senior officials, whilst giving responsibilities for various ministries to members of the SLPP party. Before the general elections in 1957, universal adult suffrage was introduced. The elections were won by the SLPP. The Legislative Council, which had now become more representative of the whole country, was renamed the House of Representatives.

In 1960, SLPP as the leading political party, and the leaders of the opposition, were invited to a constitutional conference in London to discuss the issue of independence. The date, April 27, 1961, which was the anniversary of the 1898 hut tax war in the south, was chosen as the date for Independence. An important point to note is that at the London conference of 1960 Siaka Stevens, a member of the SLPP delegation, refused to sign the Independence agreement. On his return to Sierra Leone he launched an Elections Before Independence Movement, which later became known as the All Peoples' Congress Party (APC).⁴ Elections were held in 1962 in which the APC won sixteen out of sixty-two seats, to become the opposition party to the leading SLPP party.

The period 1962 - 1967 marked the SLPP era when they led the nation. However, this period also witnessed the gradual decline in the popularity of the SLPP to the benefit of the APC. This decline in popularity was caused, among other things, by the policies of Albert Margai.

Albert had succeeded his brother Milton Margai, a very popular leader who died in 1964. While in power in 1966, Albert moved a Bill in Parliament entitled 'The One Party Constitution Of Sierra Leone'. In 1967 he also moved a Bill to pass in a Republican Constitution. Both moves failed but left the SLPP very unpopular.⁵ Their unpopularity led to the APC party winning the general elections of 1967.⁶ The leader of the APC party, Siaka Probyn Stevens, was sworn in as Prime Minister on 21 March 1967.

The swearing in of Siaka Stevens was quickly followed by a series of coups that prevented the APC from starting their rule until 1968. On 22 March the army, led by Brigadier John Lansana, quickly took over from the APC, allegedly to install the SLPP. Lansana was overthrown the next day by some of his senior officers who formed a National Reformation Council (NRC). The NRC, headed by Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith, were to remain in power for a year. Their rule was characterised by some measure of economic and social successes. They were overthrown in 1968 by some warrant officers of the army, headed by John Bangura. Instead of forming a government, John Bangura invited Siaka Stevens back from exile in Guinea, and he was sworn in as Prime Minister.

Sierra Leone is a country endowed with an abundance of natural resources, and every potential for economic and social development. As early as 1935, H.T. Dickinson, a mining consultant for De Beers of South Africa visited Sierra Leone. He reported to the De Beers directors that: 'In my view this field as a whole will produce more diamonds in value than Angola and the Congo combined'.⁷ At the time of independence in April 1961, the situation reported by Dickinson, the De Beers consultant, had not changed much. Sierra Leone still had an abundance not only of diamonds but other natural resources, and every potential for economic and social development. The director of Geological Survey at the time of independence asserted that:

Sierra Leone will be an exporter of Iron Ore for many years to come. The diamond fields are so extensive that it is unlikely that they will be worked out in the immediate future, even at the present rate of exploitation. Several other mineral discoveries recorded by the Geological Survey in recent years may become exploitable in the course of time, and hope is entertained that the regional geo-chemical prospecting surveys which are to be carried out over selected areas of Sierra Leone during the next four years may lead to the discovery of other mineral prospects.⁸

Despite this abundance of natural resources and potential for economic and social development, Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world. By the time

the APC, which had ruled for twenty four years, was ousted from power in 1992, Sierra Leone had become classified by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the poorest country in the world. Sierra Leone had 65% of its rural population living below poverty level, and an average life expectancy of only forty-two years.⁹ During APC rule the sense of common purpose that had led to Independence disintegrated into conflict, characterised by the open lust for power and material wealth. The APC created and maintained a system that enriched a few, while at the same time subjecting the rest of the populace to abject poverty. Corruption and indiscipline became institutionalised, as the beliefs and values of the leaders became influenced by their material interests and pursuit of power. The regime was characterised by a very personalised form of rule, having the features of a neo-patrimonial state.¹⁰

Development efforts were undermined. Corruption, patronage and distribution of resources on a personalised basis all undermined societal goals while enhancing self-centred goals.

Kpundeh describes it as:

Corruption in both public and private sectors has contributed to the poor state of the economy and the resulting hardships on people. Since the 1980s, Sierra Leone has been undergoing the most regressive and repressive economic conditions in its history because many people in positions of trust have put their own interests first, and the general interest of the country last. The economic condition is declining hopelessly because some politicians and top businessmen continue to rob the country of its wealth, and deposit large sums of money in personal overseas bank accounts.¹¹

Below a description will now be given of APC rule under Stevens and his successor Joseph Momoh, to show the pervasive nature of corruption, and how the entire system was converted into an instrument of self-advancement and enrichment by the government. This was in negation to the promotion of other-centredness.

3. *APC rule under Siaka Stevens 1968 -1985*

3.A *Politics*

Siaka Probyn Stevens was born on the 24th August 1905, in Moyamba district, to a Mende mother and Limba father. During the Colonial rule in Sierra Leone, he was a trade unionist who agitated for reforms. As already mentioned, he started his political career as a member of the SLPP Party, but he later on founded the Elections Before Independence Movement

(EBIM), which later became known as the All Peoples' Congress Party (APC). Under the APC party Stevens was to rule Sierra Leone for seventeen years, until he handed over power to his successor, hand-picked by himself. He is described by Roberts in his study of Sierra Leone politics as: 'A man that was privately charming and caring, but publicly callous and wicked. A man with raw intellect, combativeness, greed, and egomania'.¹²

When Stevens came to power his first task was to consolidate his rule. Local government, like chiefs, and other institutions of district administration became centralised under the direct authority of Stevens in Freetown, thereby creating loyalty to himself rather than to the local administration. His regime was characterised by the systematic repression and elimination of his opponents. In March 1971, there was an abortive coup attempt, by some members of the army.¹³ This attempt culminated in the subsequent arrest of the head of the army, Brigadier John Bangura, and some senior military officers. They were charged and convicted of treason, and were hanged.¹⁴ Stevens used this incident to tighten his hold on power, by hastily reviving a Bill for a Republican Constitution. The first stage of this Bill had previously been passed by the SLPP government in 1967, but had to be shelved because of its unpopularity. Amidst much criticism and opposition the Bill was passed. Sierra Leone thereby became a Republic on 19 April 1971, with Siaka Stevens himself as the first Executive President. Stevens as president became the 'Supreme Head of State', and 'Commander in Chief of the armed force'.¹⁵ As his designations imply, Stevens was in full control. He was the most dominant figure in the country at this time.

There was another coup attempt in 1975 by some former leading APC politicians. They accused the government of dictatorship. The leaders were again rounded up, tried, and convicted for treason. They were executed, and their corpses were placed on public display in front of the state prisons at Pademba Road before burial. This was to serve as a warning to those who would want to attempt another coup.

Coup threats aside, one of the greatest threats to APC rule came in 1977 with the student demonstration. Until the successful military coup of 1992, the student demonstration remained the most successful anti-government move that the country had ever witnessed. The crisis started on the 29th January 1977, when students of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone demonstrated against Stevens. The demonstration occurred during a congregation ceremony for the conferment of degrees held on the campus. When he

got up to deliver his address as Chancellor of the University, Stevens was greeted by the students jeering and brandishing placards, accusing him of corruption and despotism. Following the incident the APC government sent members of the 'Internal Security Unit', on campus to 'discipline' the students. The ensuing chaos resulted in violence, vandalism, thefts, rape, and personal injury and detention of some students. The students had to hastily vacate the campus fearing for their lives. The students made a statement on 8 February, which contained among other things the following points: 1. Freedom of speech and of the press must exist for people to have outlets to air their views and criticise constructively.

2a. We call for free and fair elections to be held within nine months and a public announcement be made to that effect now.

3c. Expenditures on Defence must be reduced as a positive means of solving our economic problem.

6a. We believe that non-Africans have too much say in our economy, especially Lebanese and Indians. This is because there is a strong alliance between these people and Sierra Leonean Ministers, Government Officials, and Administrators.

7a. We call for a disarmament of the Internal Security Unit (ISU).¹⁶

What the students issued as a statement, and their protest during the congregation ceremony, highlighted the opinion of the general public. The latter were afraid to voice their criticism publicly for fear of reprisal. In the light of this popular discontent the reaction by the government led to a spread of violent protests in the capital Freetown, by the school children and other people who joined the demonstration. The situation spread from Freetown to other parts of the country. The government used the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) as a propaganda machine, blaming the students instead of the government for the state of unrest. A State of Emergency was declared, and the college was officially closed. The state of emergency became a weapon used by the APC to carry out its act of victimisation against those who opposed their rule. Opponents were arrested on false charges of subversive behaviour not conducive to public interest. Newspapers came under strict censorship, editors and reporters were arrested, and violence was perpetuated against them.¹⁷

Stevens quickly called elections for May of the same year. After using violence and intimidation to suppress the opposition, the APC party won most seats unopposed. The following year the APC government forced a one-party constitution bill on the citizenry. Sierra Leone thus became a one-party state in 1978. It is ironic that the one-party was

imposed by Stevens the same person who had opposed it as opposition leader. When Albert Margai as leader of the ruling SLPP party had tried to pass the one-party bill, Stevens on that occasion had this to say: 'Not only as leader of the APC but as an individual citizen, I abhor and detest the one party system of government'.¹⁸

His reason for the imposition now was to prevent the country from disintegrating into tribal factions, as party differences reinforced tribalism.¹⁹ This move was seen as a betrayal of democracy by the silent majority who were afraid of open criticism for fear of the consequences. After one year of one -party rule Stevens justified it even further by saying:

I sincerely believe that we do not at this stage of our development have sufficient men of high calibre to waste some by using them as an opposition, destructively sniping at the men in power. There is a shortage of the right type of people. Let us marshall all our forces.²⁰

Stevens' views were quite obviously not shared by the majority. The arguments against an infringement of democracy, and the imposition of a one party system, were eloquently expressed in an open letter written by a Sierra Leonean lawyer Sarif Easmon. In his letter he highlighted the following points:

1. Sovereignty lies in the people and cannot be alienated from them.
2. A democratic government is an elected body by the people. At the end of a period of four to five years, the elected body must go back to the people to renew its mandate.
3. No group can claim the right to govern them against their will, as sovereignty is invested in the people.
4. Usually a party that seeks to make itself one-party was elected to power on multi-party basis. If the government declares itself one party without going to receive a mandate from the people in a general election, it becomes treasonable to the constitution.
5. One-party government is a self-perpetuating oligarchy and the people cannot get rid of it unless by recourse to armed force.²¹

In sum, the One-party system of government instituted in 1978, according to Kpundeh, 'Closed the door to internal accountability. All the institutions that might have served as bases for checks and balances were eliminated'.²²

The politicians under Stevens cannot be exonerated from the ills committed by Stevens, as they were in league with him. Stevens, like his successor, had a high percentage of professionals in his government, who lacked integrity and patriotism. These politicians were motivated by a personal desire for individual accumulation of wealth, prestige and power.

Very few of them could have attained these through their jobs. Politics, therefore, became personalised. It was the means of attaining that ideal of individual wealth, prestige and power. Tangri comments:

In addition to satisfying individual or psychic needs, political office provided a school teacher or clerk with his only likely opportunity for personal financial advancement. A successful candidate for parliament would easily quintuple his salary and would have access to means for taking care of his extended family's needs and desires.....Thus, the keys to transforming the petty bourgeoisie into a property-owning class were through state power and political office.²³

The politicians helped Stevens and his successor to formulate policies which were in accord with their own particular interests. They resorted to patron-client relations, manipulation of sectional and ethnic loyalties, ballot rigging, coercion and intimidation to attain and retain office. The politicians were not only corrupt, but also very callous and indifferent. On the issue of multi-party, one cabinet minister is quoted as saying:

Do you think that as a minister of government, I want to forgo the luxurious vehicle I am riding in, to encourage a multi party system? Do you think that the police man who gets a bag of rice at the end of every month can throw away that opportunity for the sake of pluralism?²⁴

The callous indifference of the politicians was in direct opposition to the constitution which they pledged to uphold. Part of the constitution reads:

Every Citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law, and the state shall ensure that every Citizen has an equal right and access to all opportunities and benefits based on merits.²⁵

3.B *The economy under Stevens*

During his rule Stevens established and maintained a structure that enriched the few, at the expense of the masses. A profitable illicit policy developed with regards to mining, the mainstay of the country's economy, during his time and has continued up to this date. The trade, particularly of gold and diamonds, was controlled by Stevens himself, some politicians, and their Lebanese allies,²⁶ a point not lost on the populace, and that was to become a major bone of contention in the ensuing years.²⁷ Kpundeh observes that during Stevens' rule: 'It was difficult to distinguish the Sierra Leone government from a private enterprise run principally by Jamil (the Lebanese boss), and Stevens'.²⁸ The Lebanese who were already active as exporters had the overseas connections, which the politicians lacked. This started a collaboration between them, and the politicians, including Stevens, to gain personal access to foreign exchange through the illicit trade of the country's natural

resources. The implications of this were that while Stevens and his allies benefited from this illicit trade, very little revenue found its way into the state coffers. For instance, taking the case of diamonds, the country's biggest revenue earner, while the illegal trade boomed, the official diamond production dropped 25% from 1.87 million carats in 1968 to 1.4 million carats in 1973.²⁹ From 1.4 million carats in 1973, it dropped further to 700.000 carats in 1977.³⁰ The illicit operation received the recognition and approval of state officials, to such an extent that the Ministry of Mines was discriminating in the issuance of diamond licenses in favour of the Lebanese at the expense of the locals; for instance in 1968, 15% of licenses were issued to the Lebanese, and 85% issued to the locals. In 1973 there was a reversal; 78% were issued to the Lebanese, and 22% to the locals. Ten years later, this trend had continued. In 1982, 73% of licenses were issued to the Lebanese and 27% to the locals.³¹

Another negative effect on the economy has been the development of a class of people, who are mostly the perpetrators of irregular business practices like smuggling, black market and profiteering. According to one newspaper article:

An ugly monster had reared its head..... It is the ugly monster of the middleman. Most of these middlemen started off as petty traders. But what is happening is that no sooner do they acquire a little affluence than they look on petty trading and spurn it as being beneath their dignity. Particularly if by going to pilgrimage they acquire a new pre-nom which makes them important persons. Look at what they are doing to the rice trade, for instance; the other time they almost got us starving, creating an artificial scarcity, in their desire to make quick money by exploitation and black market tactics.³²

This class of middlemen includes the Lebanese, Indians and some locals, mostly the Hajas - the Muslim women who have been on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The usual scenario is for them to pledge allegiance to the politicians, in return for immunity against punishment for corrupt practices. The allegiance ensures they could smuggle, hoard basic commodities, and evade taxes, while the authorities turn a blind eye. To show their disdain not only for the Lebanese but also the Hajas, locals produced this song: *Haja, Haja x2 Go na mosque go pray.* (Instead of engaging in corrupt business practices the Hajas should be in the mosques praying.)

The hosting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit, in July 1980, at a cost far exceeding the original estimate, was one of the most significant factors that accelerated the rapid economic demise of the nation. Francis Minah, the then minister of finance in an interview with the Editor of *West Africa* stated that the 1979 budget allowed forty five

million Leones,³³ but he then admitted that the total would undoubtedly exceed this. He estimated that sixty-four million Leones would be spent; the extra nineteen million coming with the next financial year.³⁴ By the time the conference finished in July 1980, it had exceeded even Minah's latest figure to an estimated cost of over one hundred million Leones.³⁵

When asked by the Editor of *West Africa* if the government had any doubts whether it was justified in spending the large amounts necessary for hosting the summit. Stevens replied: 'We do not have any doubts, well over half the expenses will not be to the benefit only of the OAU; they will be for the benefit of the country generally'. He instanced the housing that was being put up for the Heads of State at the OAU village, Hill Station, and the extensions to existing hotels, and the building of a new one, all of which he said would benefit tourism. According to Stevens it was a great honour to host such a meeting: 'There are things you can not measure in money'.³⁶ There was a huge public outcry at this expensive project which was not for the benefit of the populace. A prayer known as 'Pa Shaki's Prayer', was secretly circulated during this period. It reads:

Our Pa who is supreme
Revered is thy name
Thy fantasy village come
Thy fantastic dream will be done in Sierra Leone
As it were elsewhere in Africa
Give us this day
Food at reduced costs
And forgive us for demonstrations
As we forgive you for exploitation
And lead us not into vexation
For thine is the OAU
And ours the IOU
Forever and ever
Amen.³⁷

Even though this prayer was written as an expression of the frustration of Sierra Leoneans at the huge expenditure for the OAU summit, it is a reflection of their deep frustration at the whole scenario in the country at large. However, as was the policy of the APC, public outcry was repressed. It is in fact alleged that the bank governor Sam Bangura was murdered, in circumstances made to look like an accident, because of his refusal to authorise foreign exchange allocations upon demand from State House.³⁸ At the end of the conference, contrary to what Stevens had said, the fleet of cars, as well as the sixty luxuriously equipped bungalows at Hill Station, did not benefit the masses, but the politicians who acquired them.

3.C *Social*

The ever increasing gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', began to widen during Stevens rule, and has continued during the rule of his successors. Stevens had a high percentage of professionals in his government; lawyers, doctors, lecturers, top civil servants. A view shared by many Sierra Leoneans is that the lack of integrity by the professionals led to a high level of inefficiency in various government sectors.³⁹ Instead of using their intelligence to help in positive nation building, they used it to fleece the populace. Members of his government acquired large sums of money from donor agencies for various developmental processes, and these were duly converted for their own selfish use. They institutionalised corruption and a personalised form of rule, in which rewards were meted out to supporters, contrary to the principles of democracy. Opposition was quelled by thuggery and other repressive and oppressive measures. The resultant effect has been poverty and degradation for the vast majority, by the very few but powerful. Following after the example of the politicians the mass has developed the attitude that one has to be corrupt to be able to make progress in the country. The '*ge yu yon man*' syndrome- (Get your own man), has become the accepted norm. In other words link yourself to a politician for personal survival. In this context group goals accounted for little or nothing.

Health and education have been neglected, while preference is on defence. With this in mind Stevens created the Internal Security Unit (ISU), a group of armed personnel answerable only to himself. Education has been a privilege not a right, so over 70% of the population are illiterates. Colleges are closed at the whim of the leader, affecting the output and input of such institutions. When the students of the constituent colleges of the University demonstrated for economic reforms in 1981, the government responded with their usual tactic, that is the closure of the university for eight weeks.

Under the APC there was no way of seeking peaceful redress. When the Sierra Leone Labour Congress sent an eight point memorandum to Stevens calling for economic reforms they were ignored. They decided to stage a peaceful strike on 1 September 1981. Stevens response to them was this announcement:

Any worker who does not report for duty...tomorrow... will lose his or her job, and steps are in hand to fill the vacancies thereby created.⁴⁰

The officials of the Labour Congress were arrested and imprisoned.

However it must be said that Stevens was a very astute politician. He was so much in control that he became known as '*pas a day*' - until death removes him from the scene, nothing else would. Stevens tried to maintain a balance in parliament that reflected and represented all the ethnic groups. He reduced ethnic tensions by claiming affiliation to various ethnic groups through birth, marriage, and concubinage, as well as affiliating to various secret societies of varied ethnic and social groupings. Stevens had this to say about himself:

I am a true representative of my country. My father came from the far north, and my mother from the south-east. I was born in the centre, at Moyamba, and spent much of my childhood there among the Mende people. Later I was educated in Freetown and worked among the Creoles there. I represented the Freetown West Constituency in parliament, and I married a girl of Temne/Susu origin from the north-west. I am proud to have such a mixed background.⁴¹

It was not until after Stevens retirement that the destitute state of the nation became very obvious as his successor was a very weak leader.

4. APC rule under Joseph Saidu Momoh 1985-1992

4.A Politics

At the APC Party annual national delegates conference in August 1985, Stevens announced that he would be retiring in December. Joseph Saidu Momoh, the then Commander in Chief of the armed forces, was duly nominated, and elected leader and secretary general of the APC to replace Stevens. In a presidential election held on 1st October 1985, he returned unopposed as he was the sole candidate.⁴² Joseph Saidu Momoh was born on the 26th January 1937, to Limba parents at Binkolo in the Bombali District, Northern Province. He joined the army as a private in 1958. From this humble military beginning he rose in 1983 to become the first Major-General in the history of Sierra Leone. After becoming president-elect Momoh was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Civil Law (*honoris causa*) by the University of Sierra Leone on the 19th November 1985. He was inaugurated in January 1986. Momoh announced stringent economic and social reforms under what he termed as the 'New Order'. I will highlight some of the points Momoh made in his inauguration speech, which are a direct assessment of the situation:

Point 8.

‘Even from a cursory look at the economic problems confronting the nation today, it is clear that the challenges ahead of my administration are tremendous; scarcity of fuel, limited availability of drugs in the hospitals, shortage of rice, our staple food, frequent power-cuts and inadequacy of public transportation - these are all grave problems which must be addressed with clear thinking, determination and speed’.

Point 14.

‘Some of the problems confronting the ordinary Sierra Leonean today are primarily related to the irregular business practices of a few individuals who, for self-interest, have always by-passed the laid-down laws and regulations of our land. The malpractice of smuggling, tax-evasion, profiteering, hoarding of vital commodities’.

Point 15.

‘My administration will insist on the maintenance of a high level of discipline in all sectors of our society’.

Point 17.

‘To those people who made it a habit to ignore stipulated rules and regulations by virtue of their standing or connection in society, I say, that as from this moment, their days have come to an end. Hence forth, the question will not be “who you are” but “what you can do”.’

Point 18

‘For too long, a well-placed and privileged group of public officials has considered itself above the law and therefore not answerable to the citizens they are supposed to serve’.⁴³

Momoh’s seeming support for economic and social reform raised the hopes of many Sierra Leoneans. In various songs composed by Dr Olo, a Sierra Leonean song writer, Momoh was praised as ‘the redeemer’. People everywhere had hope he would be able to redeem the nation from demise. Momoh maintained that:

Everyone must learn to start putting the country ahead of their own selfish interests. Unless they do, we will never bring corruption to an end and we’ll never build the kind of society I believe all Sierra Leoneans want.⁴⁴

Unfortunately he lacked the strength of character, and the commitment so necessary to carry out effective policies that would have curbed corruption and bring about reform. As Reno notes:

The failure of reform in Sierra Leone lay in the president and creditors lack of commitment to policies that would have rebuilt the institutions of a state that then could protect and serve its citizens interests.⁴⁵

When it became obvious to the citizenry that Momoh was not going to deliver what he promised them as 'new order', they resorted to calling him names like Josephine Talker-feminine form of Joseph, since women are known to engage in senseless bantering. He was *Dandogoh* - a dunce.⁴⁶

He was so unpopular that within the first five years of his reign there had been a coup attempt involving the former vice-president under Stevens, Francis Minah, and some military personnel. They were tried for treason, and following the precedence of Stevens they were executed.⁴⁷ Also within this period there was a threat of a mercenary invasion when a ship loaded with arms and ammunition, the 'Silver Sea', was impounded just outside the shores of Freetown. It was revealed that several ex- army officers and some civilians living abroad had hired a group of mercenaries to invade the country and oust Momoh.⁴⁸ Also during this period there were a number of strikes and civil disturbances by the work force including teachers, for pay rise and better conditions of service.

At the time all this was happening Momoh actively promoted and encouraged ethnic loyalties and nepotism with the establishment of '*Ecute*'. This was a social group, with heavy political backing organised by the Limbas, (Momoh's ethnic group). With the creation of '*Ecute*', all the top ranks in the army, as well as all the top jobs in the civil service, were being held by Limbas. Sahr Kpundeh notes the testimony of one former finance minister, who had this to say about Momoh and *Ecute*:

In his capacity as head of the Binkolo hegemony. Momoh was responsible for a group that was drenched in sectionalism, tribalism, favoritism, nepotism, incompetence, ineptitude, treachery, indolence, wining, dining and womanizing, which inflicted the severest mismanagement of the affairs of this country.⁴⁹

It was against this background that the rebel war started in March 1991. Even though it was a very serious national disaster, the Momoh government suppressed information about the seriousness of the war, nor did it seek international support to defeat the rebels, until they became firmly entrenched. The soldiers sent to the war front lacked logistics and financial

support, leading to very low morale. The result was thefts, betrayals and connivance with the rebels complicating the situation and prolonging the war even further. A further development was the successful coup staged on 29th April 1992, by some army officers leading to the overthrow of the Momoh regime.

4.B *Economy*

When Momoh came to power he had promised that:

This nation belongs to all of us irrespective of tribe and economic and social status. With courage, commitment, integrity, and discipline, we will with God's help, be able to meet the challenges ahead of us.⁵⁰

Momoh had every opportunity of meeting the challenges and delivering what he promised, but it never quite worked out. Initially, as is described below, Momoh started off on the right track, before his diversion later on. During the initial period in 1986, he shifted alliance from the Lebanese allies of the former President Stevens, and the informal market they had created. He tried to build up the formal market by involving people other than the Lebanese. He gave an Israeli owned firm 'LIAT Construction And Finance Company' monopoly over diamond exploitation. The benefits were mutual as LIAT not only made profit, but was able to deliver the expected revenue into the state treasury. There was a remarkable boom in the official diamond exports. The official exports for 1986-87 rose 280% over 1985-86.⁵¹ the Bank of Sierra Leone reserve holdings rose from \$196,000 in 1985, to \$ 7.6 million in 1986-87.⁵² As could be seen, the LIAT connection ensured that a greater revenue came into the state coffers, as opposed to the period of the former president Stevens and his allies. This resulted in tension. The tension led to an attempted *coup d'etat* against Momoh's government in March 1987, in which a Lebanese 'godfather' Jamil Sahid Mohamed was implicated. He fled to London.⁵³

However, the Momoh/LIAT connection ended rather abruptly when the head of LIAT was arrested in London to face charges in North Carolina for fraud and cheque forgery.⁵⁴ The effect of this was to see Momoh succumbing to the pressures of those involved in the informal market. He lost control of state revenues, and the informal market, predominantly under the Lebanese, gained control. Too weak to control the economic affairs of the state, it became a field day for all involved in the informal market. Lacking the strength and commitment, he soon became involved in the informal trade. The formal state revenue

capacity diminished. Official exports plunged to only \$2million in 1988, just 5.3% of the previous year. During the first four months of 1989, only 12 carats were exported through the formal channels or 0.0003% of the levels previously achieved.⁵⁵ As a result the government stopped payment of arrears to the IMF, which they had started paying during the LIAT connection. IMF therefore blocked loans while IMF officials 'reiterated deep regret over Sierra Leone's continuing failure to fulfil its financial obligations to the Fund'. World Bank followed suit, blocking the distribution of loans in August 1987. The fall in official revenues made inflation soar from an average of 125% per annum in the early 1980s to 170% by mid 1988.⁵⁶ Momoh printed money to help, but the situation worsened. A song clandestinely composed and circulated at this time sums it up:

Momoh *mek moni o* (Momoh printed money)
Na Kaw de bien (A cow is at the back)
Wetin de bifo o (What is in front?)
Na kot en nektay (Coat and tie)
Ef i mona yu o (If you are troubled by it)
Go mek yu yon (Make your own money)
Usay den tay kaw (Where you tie up a cow)
Na de i go iyt. (That is where it will feed)
A.B. Kamara *spell boy* (A.B. Kamara spelt boy)
i say b-o-y (He said boy)
Momoh *we go skuul* (Momoh who has been to school)
Say e-o-i (spelt boy eoi)
Usay den tay kaw (Where you tie up a cow)
*Na de i go iyt*⁵⁷ (That is where it will feed)

A rough interpretation of the song is that Momoh is behaving as an illiterate, in thinking everyone else are fools. Printing new notes camouflages rather than addresses the problem at hand. However, the song advises anyone bothered by all the corruption to become just as corrupt. Momoh, however, was indifferent to criticism, as he was one of the beneficiaries of such a corrupt system.

In 1988, overseas export statistics of Sierra Leone diamonds registered US\$ 200 million. Official national statistics recorded an export figure of only US\$4 million. In 1989, overseas exports recorded US\$300 million; official Sierra Leone statistics recorded US\$ 4 million. In March 1990, the then minister of finance Tommy Taylor Morgan had this to say during his annual budget speech:

Simply put our economy is sick. Productivity is too low, unemployment is too high; the intensification of smuggling activities continues to deny the nation of the benefits of her resources; vital areas of the economy are controlled by monopolists or oligopolists, and most business people are stifling economic growth by their merciless profiteering activities.⁵⁸

By 1991, Sierra Leone with all its mineral wealth and potential for economic and social development, was listed as a least developed nation. On his own admission in public, Momoh stated that after five years in office, he had achieved nothing.⁵⁹ While this admission is quite true in terms of the economic and social benefits accrued by the state, it is not correct in terms of the personal economic wealth amassed by Momoh and his accomplices, both locally and internationally.

4.C *Social*

When there is a destructive, exploitative, and oppressive regime in power, there is no end to the negative effects this produces on the populace as a whole. The country was experiencing a total degeneration. Health and education were woefully neglected in favour of defence. The country was classified as one of the least developed in the whole world in the 1991 United Nations Human Development Table.⁶⁰ The criteria used for the creation of this table included not just the World Bank table of Gross National Product per Capita, but also an aggregate involving social criteria such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and literacy. The highest established infant mortality rate for 1990-95, was 166 per 1,000 live births, which represents 16.6% as compared to the world average of 6.4%, or 64 per 1000 live births. The lowest estimated life expectancy rates for 1985-90 are 39.4 years for males in the country, as compared to 64.4 years for the world average.⁶¹

Momoh also employed the Stevens tactics to quell opposition to his policies. The populace became a victim of a system they were powerless to challenge. Whoever attempted to question the system was systematically repressed. In January 1987 the student celebration of the 1977 student upheaval led to the closure of the university. Momoh announced that education was a privilege not a right. Even though he was referring to the tertiary level it led to a huge demonstration. Momoh's reaction to this was to curtail the privileges of the students, like reducing allowances, and forcing the students to sign an agreement before the re-opening of the University not to take part in any further demonstrations. Otherwise they would face criminal charges.

Workers going on strike for better conditions of service were threatened with the sack. Salaries were not paid on time, and the level of unemployment rose very rapidly. The

populace, particularly the youths, became demoralised. Crime and prostitution increased, the number of children attending school decreased. The appalling conditions in the country were described in *West Africa* in this way:

The conditions of life in Sierra Leone had in the past ten years, but more so in the last seven years, become unbearable. The socio-economic life of the people sank to its lowest ebb ever in the history of the country. Expected to reverse the negative economic trend inherent in the Siaka Stevens regime, the ousted president Joseph Saidu Momoh, only succeeded in deepening and widening that economic malaise. Social amenities and basic infrastructure collapsed, inflation sky-rocketed, real incomes stagnated and the strain imposed by these sets of circumstances affected, with ever increasing intensity, all spheres of the social fabric in the country.⁶²

This was the country's scenario on the eve of the rebel war, an event which might never have occurred had the APC regime not given the perpetrators the much needed excuse they were on the look out for.

5.A *The leader of the Rebel War*

The rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, is a Temne by birth. Sankoh is a former corporal of the Sierra Leone Army. Sankoh is one individual who lends credence to Cox's study mentioned earlier that personal ambitions and grievances underlay most armed upheavals in Sierra Leone.⁶³ He is a blood-thirsty and power-obsessed individual who had been implicated in two coup attempts, and several other acts of subversion in the country. In 1965, he was arrested for his part in an abortive coup plot to oust the SLPP government. He was again arrested and imprisoned for his involvement in the 1971 Bangura led coup against the APC government. After his release from prison in 1976, he started developing plans to form a rebel movement. In his own words:

I was motivated in prison where I was serving a seven year jail term....While in prison, I was suffering there and I said that when I came out I will organise the system'.⁶⁴

On his release from prison, he settled in the Eastern Province, and started a photography business. This business became a front for his interaction and organisation of some Sierra Leonean youths. In August 1987, along with some others who shared his views he went to Libya for a six weeks training scheme.⁶⁵ On his return he started recruiting members for his rebel group. Sankoh was joined by a small group of individuals who shared a common grievance with him. Like himself they had been marginalised or excluded by the APC system. For example, two of his senior combatants were in political exile in Liberia. Some

others had never succeeded in their academic pursuit at college.⁶⁶ They joined forces with Sankoh, who declared his intention was to oust the corrupt APC regime. Ironically they were willing to use wanton acts of terrorism to achieve their objectives. Considering Sankoh's track record one wonders how sincere he was in his motive. His initial plan was to start the war in late 1988 or early 1989, but he was delayed because Samuel Doe, the then Liberian head of state, refused to allow him to use Liberia as a base. When Doe was killed by Liberian rebels, Sankoh linked with one of the Liberian rebel leaders, Charles Taylor, whom he describes as a 'friend and brother in the struggle'⁶⁷ Through this link Sankoh was able to train his recruits in Voinjama City, Lofa County, in Liberia. This was Charles Taylor's base, with the advantage of being close to the Sierra Leone border.

5.B *The Rebel War*

The rebel war has been defined by Paul Richards as:

A type of text - a violent attempt to 'tell a story' or to 'cut in on the conversation' of others from whose company the belligerents feel excluded.⁶⁸

Unfortunately in 'telling their story', and 'cutting in on the conversation' of others, the ensuing violence and pillage spiralled out of control. Foday Sankoh and his recruits, known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), crossed into Sierra Leone from their base in Lofa County on the 23rd March 1991. They first attacked the border town of Boidu, where they met with very little resistance. From there they moved to Koindu also in the Eastern Province. From there they moved South East and continued on to various other parts of the country. The rebels declared that they were fighting for democracy and against the corruption of the APC.⁶⁹ Initially they gained ground in the East as they received some sympathy from the local community, who saw them as liberators against APC exploitation and oppression. When the RUF started unleashing their campaign of terror, and quickly spreading to the South, their true intentions became known. Sierra Leoneans were forced into action; the memories of the gruesome situation in Liberia forced them into action; protest marches were staged. Newspaper articles and the media all condemned the war. Crusades and prayer meetings in which the evangelicals featured very prominently sprang up all over the country.

Even though unwelcomed by the majority of the populace, Sankoh and his rebels have succeeded in unleashing carnage and destruction with callous indifference on the people.

The psychological and emotional traumas created by the rebel onslaught will take decades to erase. Even after decades not all the scars will completely fade away. An observer refers to the war as 'the most brutal war that West Africa has ever witnessed.'⁷⁰ The rebel war is seen by most people to be not a revolution but a campaign of terror aimed at the poor, the defenceless and the innocent. More than 20,000 lives have been lost, scores maimed, and over two million displaced.

The war has not only affected lives and physical structures, but even the very fabric of the society has been threatened. The war has been a disruptive force on the transmission of cultural practices as sacred bushes and other regalia are completely destroyed and people are completely uprooted from their local background. In this environment a large number of children and youths are forcefully conscripted by the rebels. Some of the captives among the children and youths are orphaned by the same war, some are displaced and lose all form of contact with their families. In this situation they have no other allegiance than to the rebel hierarchy. At the time of their capture some of the youths would already have undergone the puberty initiation; most in time would have likely gone through the rituals. When conscripted a new kind of initiation takes place in the bush. This negates the traditional pattern of initiation, where values of good behaviour and morality are instilled into the youths. In the rebel bush territories a different kind of morality is instilled into the youths; they are taught the art of bush warfare, and introduced to the drugs culture. The drugs they are introduced to make even the underage children become merciless killers.⁷¹ Girls have their childhood violently snatched from them, as they are initiated into adulthood through brutal and continuous rapes.

Community solidarity and respect for age and life has been undermined by rebel atrocities. A case in point is that of the paramount chief in Kono, who actually violated a sacred bush. He hid the rebels in this bush which was prohibited to all but members, who could only enter it at a particular time. Due to his personal grievances against the APC regime, he allowed the rebels to infiltrate and destroy Kono.⁷² The rebel war has created a situation in which people, like Foday Sankoh, with hidden agendas are emerging to further fuel the flames of the crisis. There are two categories of persons: those seeking the opportunity to settle old scores, and those seeking the opportunity of acquiring wealth overnight.⁷³ One victim had this to say:

My village was attacked by rebels who burnt down my house, and my transport lorry. I was able to identify the commando and some of the rebels who are from my

district. Because of a vendetta they killed my grandmother, mother, two sisters and my elder brother. I have lost everything.⁷⁴

The rebels have been described as 'animals' by one aid worker, and as 'hardened fighters hooked on drugs' by another.⁷⁵ Atrocities against the innocent, who have become the targets of mass slaughter, with their property being objects for destruction include:

1. In January 1994, Kaamoh a victim of rebel attack on Baoma Koya in the Kenema district was tied up by the rebels whom he describes as 'men heavily armed looking very fearful'. His ear was cut off, and they threatened to behead him and give his head to Foday Sankoh.
2. Another victim, Momoh Koroma, witnessed the brutal murder of his mother, and another female cousin was taken as hostage by the rebels who led her away into the bush to become their sex toy.⁷⁶
3. March 12 1994, Father Felin McAllister and several others were savagely killed by RUF rebels in Panguma, Kenema district. He had worked in Sierra Leone for forty years.⁷⁷
4. In March 1995 in Ngo town in the Northern Province, thirty-eight houses were set ablaze by rebels. In Port Lokko and Kambia more than two hundred school children were abducted. The boys were forcefully conscripted and most of the girls were continuously raped.⁷⁸
5. In October 1995, in an attack on Bo town, pregnant women were buried alive as a ritual sacrifice by the RUF. Another pregnant woman was set ablaze in a hut, while her husband was gunned down.⁷⁹

Another off-shoot of the war witnesses many soldiers cashing in on the situation to amass instant wealth. They are referred to as *sobel*s and are considered to be even more treacherous than the rebels. One paper reports the trial by court martial of former commanding officer of Second Battalion based in Makeni, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Chernor Deen. He is standing trial on five charges of;

1. Aiding the enemy with intent to assist them with military uniforms, boots, and armaments, all properties of the Sierra Leone Military forces.
2. Communicating with the enemy description of armaments and movement of troops with the intent to imperil the success of the government forces.
3. Fraudulently converting military uniforms, boots and armaments received by him for and on behalf of troops under his command.
4. Incitement of soldiers under his command to mutiny.
5. Failure of duty.⁸⁰

In another incident in Nimbadu Village outside of Koidu town two soldiers (*sobel*s) on duty against rebel attack, decided to seek their fortune in a mining pit. Unfortunately they were buried alive when the pit caved in.⁸¹

An even more pathetic scenario are the boy soldiers, who are being turned into vicious monsters. Mohamed Dakowa, a twelve year old boy, became a boy soldier with a mission to kill Foday Sankoh; 'so that the death of my mother would not be in vain'. He describes how his parents and many others were killed in cold blood at Golahun Tunkia, in the Kenema district. Rebels looted and burnt down the town, raped, tortured and killed many while taking others as hostages.⁸²

Even though a peace accord was signed between the rebel leader and the government on 30th November 1996, the rebels are yet to lay down arms. Reports reaching the capital state that less than a week after signing the Peace Accord, RUF rebels unleashed a fresh round of atrocities on Tonkolili District in the Northern province, killing at least 150 people. Women and children were locked up in houses and set ablaze; dozens more were brutally macheted.⁸³ The rebel war continues as the most destructive force in the history of the country, a force aimed at the innocent, most of whom have not benefited from the state resources. All this is in direct negation to the traditional ideal of *kabudu*, which emphasises other-centredness as opposed to self-centredness.

6. *The Military takeover*

6.A *The Coup*

The army officers who staged the coup had been soldiers fighting in the front-line against the rebels. They marched to Freetown from the front-line on the morning of April 29 1992, to overthrow the Momoh regime. Their mission was a success. The coup leader, Captain Valentine Strasser, in his first broadcast to the nation on the night of April 29, summarised the state of affairs in the country and the reason for the coup:

Fellow citizens, for over twenty three years we have been misruled by an oppressive, corrupt, exploitative and tribalistic bunch of crooks and traitors under the umbrella of the APC government. This regime has perpetuated nepotism, tribalism, gross mismanagement and total collapse of the economy, education, health, transportation and communication system. This regime has brought

permanent poverty and deplorable life for most Sierra Leoneans.....This regime has failed us woefully.....It is all over now.⁸⁴

Strasser went on to say:

After thirty one years of Independence, at least we can go out today and celebrate the final death of nepotism, gross mismanagement, corruption, injustice, tribalism and economic decay. We can go out and celebrate the resurrection of accountability, economic and social justice, and the dignity of Sierra Leoneans.⁸⁵

Captain Valentine Strasser, who headed the military junta known as the National Provisional Ruling Council, now became the youngest head of state in the world at the age of twenty-six years. The coup has been widely acclaimed as a nearly bloodless and peaceful take-over. As the preconditions necessary for a political upheaval and change were already in place in the country, even the sceptics welcomed the coup. The youthful Strasser became regarded as the redeemer who would free the people from the yoke of the oppressive APC regime, and the atrocities of the rebels. The favourite national prayer was quoted by many Sierra Leoneans who saw the coup as an act of divine intervention. The prayer, known as 'The Governor Clarkson Prayer for Sierra Leone', was said on behalf of the nation by the first governor of the colony in 1790 before his retirement. Part of it reads:

Should any person have a wicked thought in his heart, or do anything knowingly to disturb the peace and comfort of this our country, let him be rooted out, O God, from off the face of the earth, but have mercy upon him hereafter.⁸⁶

This prayer has been used on many occasions against the APC, the rebels, and at various periods of national crisis. In rallies, public meetings, prayer meetings and crusades, there was an open condemnation of the APC and the rebels. The general enthusiasm and support of the coup was a reflection of how desperate Sierra Leoneans were to see the end of APC misrule, and a restoration of the values and norms they held dear.⁸⁷ The NPRC government was very popular. When they announced an attempted counter-coup on 29 December, NPRC support rose even further. There were demonstrations in Freetown in support of the government, and public opinion was strongly in their favour. When foreign donors like the British Government suspended part of its foreign aid package in protest at the execution of the counter-coup plotters, Sierra Leoneans could not understand why Britain should not support the NPRC that had overthrown the corrupt APC regime.⁸⁸

6.B *Developments in the Country under the NPRC*

Strasser launched a programme of reforms, which helped the country on its way to recovery. A commission of inquiry was launched to look into the conduct of the APC while in power.⁸⁹ The revelations made by the inquiries were very damning, as it showed the unimaginable scale of corruption of the APC regime. As a result of the commission members of cabinet of the APC had their assets seized and were ordered to pay back huge sums of money they had stolen from the country's coffers.

The NPRC launched a 'keep the city clean' campaign which created a cleaner and healthier environment.⁹⁰ For this campaign it was compulsory for the citizens to clean their compounds and the surrounding environment on the third Saturday of every month, known as 'Cleaning Day'. Queues for food, fuel and other essentials that had marked the end of the Momoh regime were no longer in existence, as there were no shortages.

By their first anniversary in power the Strasser regime promised a return to civilian rule by April 29 1996. To achieve this he appointed a committee, 'The national committee for the return of democracy', charged with the responsibility of working out the ramifications for a return to democracy. By this time they had gained some military successes against the rebels. Point six of his first anniversary broadcast to the nation reads:

After twelve months in power, we can assess with reasonable satisfaction a reawakening of a new sense of discipline and dedication in many spheres of our national life resulting in, among other things a gradual but noticeable change of attitude, and a cleaner and healthier environment throughout the country.⁹¹

In terms of the economy the country followed a strict adjustment programme. In 1993, a combined World Bank and IMF team visiting Sierra Leone described the management of the country's economy under the NPRC regime as a feat of outstanding performance. Inflation was brought down from 95% to 16%.⁹²

On the whole one can say that despite their youthfulness and tendency towards an extravagant dress code, and some excesses, the NPRC achieved more for the country during their short period in office than the APC regime had done. There was a democratic election in February 1996, and the civilian government was installed in April 1996.

7. Conclusion of the chapter

One can conclude that the politics of corruption in Sierra Leone is indeed a demonstration of what goes wrong when individuals become self-centred as opposed to other-centred. The well-being of the whole community is put at stake. When it is the political system it is even worse. This is because politics can be viewed as a social institution, concerned with the organisation and maintenance of the established societal order. The organisation and maintenance involves a process in which the 'power structure' is of vital importance. The power structure is responsible for the meeting of the material needs like shelter and food, as well as the non-material needs like security, and feeling of belonging for the population. The power structure created and maintained by the APC regime was of institutionalised corruption, patronage, greed, nepotism, and self-centredness. Guided by their personal interests, the politicians abuse of power created a situation in which a 'new morality', different from the traditional, became institutionalised. The 'new morality' is characterised by dishonesty, greed, indiscipline, lack of commitment to community goals, selfishness, individualism, immorality, and anti-social behaviour.

Although the disruption created by the politics of corruption has had devastating consequences for individuals and society on the whole, yet as a result most individuals within the Sierra Leone society have become aware of the value of *kabudu*. This is creating a feeling of nostalgia for the type of *kabudu*, which emphasises corporateness, and the willingness to work for the common good of all. The awareness of the value of *kabudu* was demonstrated on several occasions by demonstrations and strike actions. More recently it was demonstrated in the enthusiastic support for the 1992 coup. Even though individuals have been powerless to change the political system, yet their perceptions on what society should be has remained undiminished. Individuals are willing to support any organisation that will restore the right standards of community well-being. This seems to be one reason for the popularity of the evangelical movement, which seems to be fulfilling the prevailing need for *kabudu* in the light of the political malfunctioning, and the changes taking place in the country. The evangelical movement forms the subject of discussion in the next two chapters.

¹ Fyle, C.M. *The History*, p.6.

² *ibid.* p. 120.

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- ³ *ibid.* p.139.
- ⁴ *ibid.* p.141.
- ⁵ *ibid.* p.141.
- ⁶ APC victory marked the first time in Independent Africa that a ruling party was ousted by the opposition.
- ⁷ 'The Sierra Leone Diamond Rush', *The Journal of the Sierra Leone Society*, Sierra Leone Studies, New series, No 18, June 1963 -January 1967, Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, p.79.
- ⁸ *Sierra Leone Trade Journal*, Freetown: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, May 1961, p.13.
- ⁹ Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone*, Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, Inc., 1995, p.28.
- ¹⁰ Riley, S.P. & D. Fasholé-Luke, 'Political Leadership And Economic Policy', *Sierra Leone Studies at Birmingham*, University of Birmingham: Centre of West African Studies, 1988, p.104.
- ¹¹ Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption*, p.3.
- ¹² Roberts, G. *The Anguish of Third World Independence: The Sierra Leone Experience*, Lanham, London: University Press Of America Inc, 1982, p.ix.
- ¹³ Personal fears and ambitions, as well as corporate grievances of military men, have been the basis for military coups in Sierra Leone, rather than to overthrow corrupt and inefficient civilian regimes. See T. Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A case study of African Soldiers in politics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 1976, p.18.
- ¹⁴ Fyle, C.M. *The History*, p.142.
- ¹⁵ Office of the President Publication, *Background to Sierra Leone*, p.123.
- ¹⁶ Roberts, G.O. *The Anguish*, p.325.
- ¹⁷ This recurring theme of suppression and intimidation under false arrests, state of emergency and closure of colleges, became a pattern not only under Stevens, but was also repeated by his successor Momoh.
- ¹⁸ Reno, W. *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*, Cambridge: CUP, 1995, p.79.
- ¹⁹ APC National Delegates Conference, 1977.
- ²⁰ 'President Stevens Interviewed', *West Africa*, 6 August 1979, p.1401.
- ²¹ Roberts, G.O. *The Anguish*, p.336.
- ²² Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption*, p.63.
- ²³ Tangri, R. *Politics in Sub Sahara Africa*, London & Portsmouth N.H.: James Currey & Heinemann, 1985, p.29&31.
- ²⁴ J.M. Gendemeh, minister of state for agriculture, quoted in *African Report*, Nov.-Dec. 1990, p.26.
- ²⁵ *The Constitution of Sierra Leone*, Sierra Leone Government Printers, 1991 reprint, part 1, section 8, 2a.
- ²⁶ The Lebanese began arriving from Lebanon in the 1890s. The early Lebanese were very poor, but they traded vigorously and quickly became prosperous. See Fyle, C.M. 1981, p.110.
- ²⁷ Point 6a. of the students' resolution in February 1977 reads: 'We believe that non-Africans have too much say in our economy, especially Lebanese and Indians. This is because there is a strong alliance between these people and Sierra Leone Ministers, Government officials, and Administrators'.
- ²⁸ Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption*, p.24.
- ²⁹ Reno, W. *Corruption And State Politics*, p.89.
- 'Government Diamond Office', Annual Report , Freetown 1974, p.5.

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- ³⁰ Fyle, C.M. *The History*, p.143.
- ³¹ *Sierra Leone Gazette*, Freetown: Government Printers, 1968-1982.
- ³² 'Ugly Monster', *We Yone*, May 4 1980, p.3.
- ³³ At that time 1 Leone and 50 pence was the equivalent of 1 pound sterling. Now in 1999, the exchange rate is 3000 Leones to 1 pound sterling.
- ³⁴ 'What the OAU will bring', *West Africa*, 6 August 1979, p.1403.
- ³⁵ Fyle, C.M. *The History*, p.144.
- ³⁶ 'What the OAU will bring', *West Africa*, 6 August 1979, p.1401.
- ³⁷ A printout circulated during the OAU, and reproduced by Roberts in *Anguish*, p.180. The actual source of this print remains anonymous.
- ³⁸ Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p.90.
- ³⁹ See 'The Scandal of Sierra Leone', *West Africa*, 21-28 December 1981, p.3028, Roberts, G.O. *The Anguish of Third World Independence*, & Kpundeh, J.S. *Politics and Corruption*, p.62.
- ⁴⁰ Alie, J. *A New History*, p.244.
- ⁴¹ Stevens, S. *What Life Has Taught Me*, London: Kensal Press, 1984, p.18.
- ⁴² Momoh had been hand picked by Stevens himself. Since the latter was party leader and president there was no audible opposition to his choice.
- ⁴³ Alie, J. *A New History*, p.289.
- ⁴⁴ 'Momoh's New Order', *Africa Report*, July-August, 1986, p.32.
- ⁴⁵ Reno, W. *Corruption And State Politics*, p.173.
- ⁴⁶ One incident took place on 17 July 1990, when some workers of the ministry of works staged a protest against the non-receipt of salaries. They marched down Campbell Street, singing that Momoh Dandogoh must be informed that they needed their salaries.
- ⁴⁷ The coup involving Francis Minah and others took place in March 1987. They were executed in October 1989.
- ⁴⁸ The Silver Sea affair took place in 1988.
- ⁴⁹ Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption*, p.66.
- ⁵⁰ 'How's the revolution?' *West Africa*, 5-11 October 1992, p.1656.
- ⁵¹ *Bank of Sierra Leone Economic Trends*, Freetown: Mimico, June 1987. cf. Reno, pp. 158ff.
- ⁵² Bank of Sierra Leone, *Annual Report*, Freetown: Government Printers, 30 June 1987, Table 20.
- ⁵³ Jamil Sahid had become very popular under Stevens. He controlled the informal diamond trade. Earlier he had shown his opposition to the new Momoh/LIAT alliance by sending his personal gunmen to attack a politician who had LIAT connections, and was very open in his criticism of the informal market.
- ⁵⁴ 'A dose too much', *West Africa*, 6 July 1987, p.1280.
- ⁵⁵ Reno, *Corruption and State Politics*, p.160.
- ⁵⁶ *ibid.* p.160.
- ⁵⁷ The money in the sum of ten pound notes was issued on the 27th April 1988.
- ⁵⁸ 'Setting Right Values and Attitudes for Nation Building', *The Catalyst*, Nov.- Dec., 1996, p.16.
- ⁵⁹ 'After the coup what next?' *West Africa*, 18-24 May 1992, p.840.
- ⁶⁰ 'Freetown and democracy', *West Africa*, 11-17 May 1992, p.785.
- ⁶¹ Infant mortality rate means the death at the age of under one year per 1,000 live births. *Daily Mail Guinness Book of Records* 1997, part 2, p.9, Britain: Guinness Joint Publishers.
- ⁶² 'In The Throes of Change', *West Africa*, 8-14 June, 1992, p.959.
- ⁶³ Cox, T.S. *Civil-Military Relations*, p.217.

- ⁶⁴ Interview conducted by Tony Hesmart, for *Concord Times Newspaper*, December 6, 1996, p.9.
- ⁶⁵ 'Bushpath to Destruction', *For di People*, January 18, 1997, p.2.
- ⁶⁶ Richards, P. *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, Oxford & Portsmouth: James Currey & Heinemann, 1996, p.26.
- ⁶⁷ 'How I met Taylor', *Concord Times*, December 6, 1996, p.9.
- ⁶⁸ Richards, P. *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, p. xxiv.
- ⁶⁹ 'Politics of rebellion', *West Africa*, 21 September 1992, p.1608-9.
- ⁷⁰ 'Calamity of Sierra Leone as the West plays Ostrich', *West Africa*, 23-29 March, 1992, p.494.
- ⁷¹ One twelve year old boy captive describes how they were give cocaine. Under the influence of this drug they could become fearless and bold enough to carry out atrocities against innocent individuals. See Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, p.90.
- ⁷² Informal conversation with Hawa Berewa in Freetown on 24 August 1995. Hawa is an in-law of the chief. She was able to escape from the chief's compound just two days before the rebels reached it.
- ⁷³ 'Foday Sankoh: The day of reckoning', *For di People*, December 10, 1996, p.2.
- ⁷⁴ 'Does God expect me to forgive the rebels?' *The Catalyst*, July - September 1995, p.13.
- ⁷⁵ 'People are the enemy as rebels and soldiers spread terror', *For di People*, March 9, 1996, p.2.
- ⁷⁶ 'Rebel Victim tells his story', *Weekly Echo*, January 12-15, 1994, p.1.
- ⁷⁷ 'Roman Catholic Priest Murdered', *New Citizen*, March 13, 1994, p.3.
- ⁷⁸ 'Foday Sankoh: The day of reckoning', *For di People*, December 10, 1996, p.2.
- ⁷⁹ 'Bo Town Attack', *For di People*, October 10, 1995, p.2.
- ⁸⁰ 'Court Martial', *Uni-Week*, December 1, 1994, p.1.
- ⁸¹ 'Sobels Seek Fortune', *Weekend Spark*, February 10, 1995, p.3.
- ⁸² 'My Mission is to kill Sankoh', *Concord Times*, February 22, 1994, p.1.
- ⁸³ 'Rebels Massacre 150 People in Tonkolili', *Concord Times*, December 9, 1996, p.1.
- ⁸⁴ Extracts from Captain Valentine Strasser's first broadcast to the nation. Printed by the Ministry of information and broadcasting.
- ⁸⁵ *ibid.* See also 'Freetown and democracy' *West Africa*, 11-17 May 1992, p.789
- ⁸⁶ Extract from Governor Clarkson's Prayer: a framed copy is found in many homes in Freetown.
- ⁸⁷ 'Sierra Leone: Rallies of Support', *West Africa*, 25-31 May 1992, p.892.
- ⁸⁸ Opala, J. 'Ecstatic Renovation!', *African Affairs*. 1994, 93, p.208.
- ⁸⁹ Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption*, p.4.
- ⁹⁰ Opala, J. 'Ecstatic Renovation', p.195.
- ⁹¹ Extract from his Excellency Captain Valentine Strasser's first anniversary broadcast to the Nation on April 29 1993.
- ⁹² 'Sierra Leone given high marks', *West Africa*, 20-26 September 1993, p.1677.

Chapter Five

The Origins of The Evangelical Christian Movement in Sierra Leone

1. *Kabudu as cornerstone of Sierra Leone society*

Chapter four helps in understanding the value individuals place on *kabudu*, and why there is nostalgia for *kabudu* norms and values. Following on from chapter four, chapters five and six examine *kabudu* in the light of the evangelical Christian movement, a movement which seems to be fulfilling the prevailing need for *kabudu* in the light of the changes taking place in the country. This chapter describes the origins and teachings of the evangelical movement by examining five groups within the movement.

2.A *The Evangelicals*

In the twentieth century one of the greatest growth areas for global Christianity has been Africa. The vivid nature of this expansion of Christianity in Africa has been referred to as 'the fourth great age of Christian expansion'.¹ Andrew Walls observes that:

Perhaps one of the two or three most important events in the whole of church history has occurred.....a complete change in the centre of gravity of Christianity, so that the heartlands of the church are no longer in Europe, decreasingly in North America, but in Latin America, in certain parts of Asia, and in Africa.²

He argues further that it is not simply that there has been a massive increase in the number of professing Christians in Africa in the course of the twentieth century; there has been such a degree of change of religious adherence as to alter completely the relative positions of European and African Christianity. In 1910, Europe was part of the Christian heartland, 'typically' Christian territory; at the end of the century it is moving towards the Christian margins. The proportion of the world's Christians who are Africans, meanwhile, steadily increases. At the end of the century Africa is appearing as the Christian heartland.³

More recently an important factor in the expansion of Christianity in Africa is the proliferation of a very pervasive and dynamic brand of spirituality: The Evangelical Movement.⁴ Even though the expansion of this movement is more pronounced in Africa, Evangelicalism is not just limited to Africa but is a world-wide interdenominational movement. The characteristics of Evangelicalism begin with the need for conversion.

Believing that humans are sinners, evangelicals declare the need for a change of life when the gospel is received. Evangelicals are activists in their effort to spread the gospel. Activism does not end with theological concerns, but extends into the sphere of social and political concerns. The four main qualities to be identified in this world-wide movement are: the assignment of absolute supremacy to scripture, the sinfulness of humanity, the work of Jesus Christ in Salvation, and the work of the Holy Spirit in inwardly regenerating and outwardly sanctifying.⁵ In Africa thousands of these movements are springing up, offering a distinct freshness to the existing Christian current.

2.B. *The Sierra Leone background*

The Evangelical movement in Sierra Leone combines local and extraneous elements in diverse and dynamic ways. It has developed not as an alternative response to Christianity, but as an alternative mode of spirituality within Christianity that is different from the conventional traditional church mode.⁶ It is a distinctive movement cutting across denominational allegiances. It influences members of the existing churches, and it is also creating new ones. The Evangelicals in the country are given a distinct identity as 'born again'. There has been a proliferation of evangelical groups in the country since the 1980s. The growth of the evangelical movement in the country seems to have come about largely as a protest against a system in which the pivotal functions of religion as the moulder of social norms and values have become indistinct and ineffective. This is largely due on the one hand, to the seemingly spiritual stagnation of the older churches established during the early missionary enterprise, commonly referred to as the mainline churches, and on the other, the corrupt political and social system that is causing a disruption in the traditional norms and values of correct behaviour.

As mentioned earlier in this work, the political corruption which the country is still experiencing was actually orchestrated by the APC party. The party came to power in 1967, six years after Sierra Leone became an independent nation. But for a brief spell between 1967 and 1968, when a series of coups prevented the APC from ruling, it remained in power until 1992 when ousted by a military coup. During their rule the prevailing political climate in the country was created. This climate has made possible the continuing poverty and oppression of the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans by the very few rich and powerful. This situation has had not only socio-economic implications, but also religious and moral

consequences. The political and social changes taking place in the country are viewed by the evangelicals as emerging opportunities sent by God. Their duty is to become vehicles for much needed reforms, first in the religious sphere, but also in correcting the ills of the inadequate social and political systems.⁷

As far as the mainline churches are concerned their seeming stagnation can be seen, to some extent, in the decline of church attendance in comparison with the evangelical churches. In 1990 a survey of church growth was conducted in Freetown by the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone. The finding, although not conclusive and therefore subject to caution, reveal the fast growth of the evangelical churches and the decline in the mainline churches. The survey gives as one reason for the above situation the fact that 'a lot of migrational activities have been going on in Freetown, creating a metropolis consisting of a rich tribal influx and blend from the four corners of the country'.⁸ Whereas the mainline churches have concentrated their efforts on the ethnic groups like the Krios who have already embraced Christianity as their way of life, the newer evangelical churches have opened their ministries to include migrants who need to be evangelised.

The figures given by the 1990 survey include: The Anglican church with 18 congregations, and church membership of around 25,000, yet the average church attendance on Sundays was only 2569. The combined Methodists are comprised of 'The Methodist Church of Sierra Leone', with 20 congregations, 'The West African Methodist', with 12 congregations, 'The Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone', with 12 congregations, and 'The African Episcopal Church', with 10 congregations. All four combined had a membership of over 40, 000, with an average church attendance of 6,754. The Roman Catholic Church, with 8 congregations and over 12,000 members, had an average church attendance of 2,991. The African Independent or 'Spiritualist' churches, with 34 churches had an average attendance of 3,943. The Evangelical Movement, with 77 new churches, had an average church attendance of 12,059. After the Reinhard Bonnke Crusade in December 1991, growth among the evangelicals accelerated even further.⁹ The above figures though subject to caution, indicate that in 1990 the total number of persons attending the evangelical churches was greater than those attending the mainline churches, and just about a percentage less than the combined figure for all the mainline churches.

2.C The Evangelical rise

The background of political and civil unrest seems to have led to the proliferation of the evangelical movement, and to it attaining prominence in the society. When the rebel war started on 23rd March 1991, Sierra Leoneans were forced into action; there were protest marches, as well as press and media attention. More importantly, crusades and prayer meetings in which the evangelicals featured very prominently sprang up all over the country.

At the invitation of the evangelicals after the 23 March 1991, one notable crusade was held in December 1991, by a very popular Evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke. Bonnke is a German evangelist. He heads his own ministry known as Christ For All Nations (CFAN). His vision is to evangelise the whole world. He began his travelling crusade in 1975 with a crusade in Botswana. In the succeeding years he has preached revival in many African countries, and out of Africa he has been as far afield as Scandinavia, USA, and New Zealand.¹⁰ The intention of CFAN is to carry out revival right across the African continent. One of the team's most popular slogans is 'Africa shall be saved'. Bonnke predicts that their big crusade tent will be erected in Cairo by the end of the century, by which time he claims, 'Africa will be the most Christian continent on earth'. Paul Gifford observes:

It has been estimated that the number of African Christians increases by 16,000 a day. Even if this figure is wildly inflated there is no denying the rapid increase, and it is clear that CFAN already plays a significant role in this increase.¹¹

In Sierra Leone the CFAN crusade attracted the largest attendance in the history of the country. Many described the crusade as the 'mother of all crusades', as it mobilised the biggest crowd ever in the country with both Christians and Muslims in attendance.¹² The General Secretary of the Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL) declared:

It was most certainly the most momentous event in the history of the country. The people have been deeply affected because not only was salvation preached, but it was demonstrated with healings. The long term effects in church growth will be phenomenal, not only in numbers, but in the lives of those who are truly convinced that Jesus is Lord.¹³

The emphasis of this and other crusades, and of prayer meetings, was on the power of Jesus Christ to redeem the country and its citizenry from the demonic forces seeking to destroy it. Since Africans always find spiritual explanations for physical situations, Sierra Leoneans saw hope in what the evangelicals were offering as the power to deliver. This African

dimension is significant as Christians and non-Christians alike were of the opinion that the occurrences in the country were not normal. Some evangelicals were even reported as saying one of their members had had a vision in which it was revealed that the former president Siaka Stevens had sold the country to the dancing demon of destruction in exchange for power. The prediction would be fulfilled unless the power of Jesus destroyed the demonic forces.¹⁴

Ironically, the area in which the war started, and which was to become the rebel stronghold, was renowned as the home of some of the *toto-gbe-moi* (powerful diviners) and *nguamoi* (witchfinders). People travelled from all over the country to consult them. The question being asked was why were they powerless in stopping the rebels who were inflicting atrocities on the innocent. There were even eye witness reports that the rebels were using mystical powers: they could appear and disappear.¹⁵ Evangelicals capitalised on this lack of confidence to propagate their own brand of spirituality. Two evangelical choruses popularised at this time emphasise that whereas Jesus' power is dominant, all other powers are useless. The choruses go:

All powa in heaven and earth belongs to God x2
Mami wata powa, powales powa
Juju man powa, powales powa
Mori man powa, powales powa
But Masta Jesus powa
Supa Supa powa.

and;

Lift his name high, high x2
We conquer Satan
We conquer witchcraft
We conquer demons
In the name of Jesus
Shout Alle -Alleluia x2

With the further deepening of the crisis situation in the country, more and more people are beginning to identify with the evangelicals. Some of them are drawn to the evangelicals because of the remarkable testimonies the evangelicals give about encounters with rebels and their deliverance by the power of God. One victim's story relates that when the rebels attacked Kabala, it was just after a black goat *sarrah* (sacrifice) had been offered to the ancestors of the land for protection against rebel attack. The sacrifice was carried out at the

community centre, with most people in the town in attendance at 4.30 p.m. She notes that: 'At 4.50 p.m., the blood from the goat *sarrah* must still have been flowing. Then it happened'. She goes on to describe the carnage and shootings caused by the rebels. During this whole process she hid herself in her house praying. On several occasions she heard footsteps outside her compound, and her door was tried many times. She says 'I took comfort from Psalm 27', which says: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?' The next day they were rescued and taken to Freetown. In her own words: 'I immediately went to church to testify of God's saving power, as I had promised God I would do, if he delivered me in the attack'. It is symbolic that in her testimony she notes that several people had been killed and some forcefully conscripted, but she mentions specifically that during this attack the local head of the *Tamaboro* (traditional group of hunters), feared and respected for their mystical powers, had his head chopped off with his own sword by the rebels.¹⁶ According to the lady giving the testimony, the killing of the *tamaboro* leader was an indication of the power of God over and above all other powers.¹⁷

When the military coup happened on April 29 1992, Sierra Leoneans were ready for change. The coup was seen as justified even by those who would normally have opposed it, because of the stranglehold by the corrupt and inefficient APC government. The coup was seen as a direct intervention of God, as a result of all the crusades and prayer meetings.¹⁸ As these events had been organised and conducted by the evangelicals, a further upsurge in the movement has resulted. The evangelical movement, with the firm conviction of a God-sent mission, are concretely reflecting on, and taking action in, addressing the issues being presented by the political and social turmoil in the country.

3.A *The origins of five Evangelical groups in Sierra Leone*

In this work, while making a general reference to the evangelical movement and the various groups within it, I will single out five specific groups for examination and analysis. This hopefully will help in providing a sufficient understanding of the role of the evangelicals in the country as a whole. I will be looking at the following: The Scripture Union, the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone, Christians In Action, Christian Life Era, and the Jesus is Lord Ministries. The five are in many ways a fair representation of the evangelicals in the country for various reasons. Scripture Union (SU) is the oldest Bible based evangelical organisation in the country. For many years it remained the only evangelical

Bible-based ministry in the country. Even today, when there has been a proliferation of many evangelical groups, many leaders and some members of the groups trace their Christian maturity and leadership ability to their involvement with SU during their school days. The Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (EFSL), as its name implies, is the central organisation of all the various evangelical groups in the country. Christians In Action (CIA) was originally imported from the USA. It started as a para-church organisation, but has now become a vibrant local church. Christian Life Era Sierra Leone (CLESL) started as an indigenous ministry. It caters mostly for the upwardly social mobile. Jesus is Lord Ministries (JLM) started as an indigenous ministry by a Limba woman from a Muslim background. This is the only group that was started solely by a woman; it caters mostly for the grassroots.

3.B *The Scripture Union of Sierra Leone (SUSL)*

The Scripture Union has its origins among the conservative evangelicals in Britain. In 1859 a young man by the name of Payson Hammond, studying at the Free Church College in Edinburgh, conducted a children's mission in nearby Musselburgh. Moved by the opportunities he saw there, he decided to devote his life to evangelism among children. Upon completion of college, he went to minister in London. It was through seeing Hammond at work in London in 1867 that another evangelical by the name of Josiah Spiers decided to begin home meetings for children. The work grew, and in 1868 a committee was formed to organise the children's meetings. The committee adopted the name, the Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM). At the prompting of a Sunday School teacher in Keswick, Annie Marston, who wished to help her class read the Bible regularly, the children's Scripture Union was begun in 1879 as another activity of CSSM. Within ten years the CSSM activity had grown to include adult meetings. Bible reading cards were circulated, eventually rising to 470,000 in twenty-eight languages. It continued expanding into a world wide movement. The name was changed to Scripture Union in 1960.¹⁹

The SU Ministry was introduced into Sierra Leone in 1884 with special cards which gave scripture readings for each day of the year. Interest was awakened and soon SU groups were started at the Sierra Leone Grammar School and the Annie Walsh Memorial School, which were then the Church Missionary Society Schools in Freetown.²⁰

The first travelling secretary employed by SUSL was a Sierra Leonean named William F. Smith. He is described as a man with tremendous zeal for God's work earning him the pet name 'Bible Smith'. By 1901, 'Bible Smith' was supplying reading notes and cards to about three thousand SU members, who made up seventy-three branches of SUSL both in Freetown and the provinces. Sierra Leoneans acted as secretaries to these branches which had sprung up in diverse places throughout the country.

The death of 'Bible Smith' in 1927 almost brought about the death of SUSL as well. Though the Union was able to go on for a few more years, the vitality which inspired the work ended with the death of Bible Smith. After a rather long period of silence and very little activity, it was revitalised towards the end of 1957. The first SU camp for boys was held in January 1958, at Kabala in the Northern Province. The need was then felt for the establishment of a committee to manage the growing activities of the Union. In 1961 the first national committee was established with a Sierra Leonean Lecturer Dr Daniel Jonah as chairman. Mr Bill Robert came from England in 1970 and served for fifteen years as General Secretary of the SU. He was succeeded by Abraham Sesay, a Sierra Leonean teacher. He was in office from 1985 -1990. The present Secretary General is Donald Manley, who is an honours economics graduate from the University of Sierra Leone.

As the name SU implies, the Bible is central in all of its activities and programmes. The SU logo is a lamp with psalm 119 v.105 written on it: 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path'.²¹ SU works with the various churches to make God's good news known to children, young people, adults and families. They encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer, so that they may come to personal faith in Jesus Christ, grow in maturity and become both committed church members and servants of a world in need.²²

3.C *The Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (EFSL)*

The EFSL, formerly called 'The Sierra Leone Evangelical Fellowship'(SLEF), was started in early 1950's.²³ The Sierra Leone government later requested all organisations outside of the government agencies, to stop using the name 'Sierra Leone' at the beginning of their titles, explaining the switch to 'The Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone'(EFSL) in 1959.²⁴ The EFSL was initially started by four missionary bodies, all belonging to the

'Evangelical' missions. The four were: The American Wesleyan Mission (AWM), The United Brethren in Christ (UBC), The Missionary Church Association in Africa (MCA), and The Evangelical United Brethren (EUB). The four bodies were already in operation in Sierra Leone before 1950.²⁵ They were affiliated with the United Christian Council (UCC), now known as the Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL). The UCC/CCSL used to be the umbrella organisation for all the various Christian missionary bodies, churches, and para-church organisations in the country. Representatives of the four bodies in the country became dissatisfied with the CCSL, when it became evident to the four groups that the emphasis on evangelism and commitment to Jesus were being overshadowed by various other concerns. In protest, the four groups decided to break away and institute a fellowship that would give evangelism and personal commitment to Jesus prominence. The EFSL was born in the early 1950s to meet the needs they felt CCSL was neglecting. EFSL emphasis at this time was on Bible study, spiritual renewal, business, and sharing of common goals for the ministry in Sierra Leone.²⁶

The first main project undertaken by the EFSL, was the establishment of The Sierra Leone Bible College (SLBC) at Jui, with the first classes starting in September 1964. The four missionary groups, AWM, MCA, UBC, and EUB, came together in 1959 to plan for a cooperative Bible College. The purpose of the college was to train pastors for the ministry of the churches. While there were teachers training colleges, there were no training colleges for pastors. Over the five year period that the four groups met, they discussed a tentative curriculum, possible sites, sharing of costs, and other logistics. The EUB, however, pulled out before its inception. The AWM, MCA, and UBC joined forces to start the college in 1964. They were joined by The Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone (BCSL) in 1970.²⁷ The college started with five students, but now caters for over a hundred students at a time. They have different levels of education including a Certificate of Pastoral Training, a Diploma in Theology, a Bachelor's Degree in Theology, a Women's Programme, and Theological Education by Extension. Almost all the churches in Sierra Leone have sent students to SLBC for training as pastors.

In 1985 a Sierra Leonean Reverend, Y.M. Kroma, became president of the Wesleyan Mission, and chairman of the EFSL.²⁸ He pioneered the idea of the formation of an EFSL secretariat, that would have an organised structure, as well as include any other Evangelical group not comfortable with the policies of the CCSL. After much deliberations, the EFSL

secretariat was established in 1987 with just one paid clerical staff. At this time they occupied one room at the SU headquarters at Pademba Road. As the EFSL activities intensified and expanded to include other groups deeming the CCSL to be incompatible with evangelism, a General Secretary was appointed in 1989, in the person of another Sierra Leonean, Crispin Cole. It was then decided that bigger office space was needed. A long term lease was therefore acquired on a property at Circular Road. The building was renovated, and EFSL occupied the renovated building in 1991. The building has three floors, occupied by four departments: the administrative department, the relief and development department, the evangelism and church ministries department, and the women's ministry department. EFSL employs over twenty full-time staff, involved with its various wings. The staff members are drawn from various evangelical groups in the country. The organisation itself has grown to become the umbrella organisation of almost all the evangelical groups in the country. As the umbrella organisation of the evangelicals some projects are done directly under its auspices. Other projects are encouraged and carried out as individual member groups.

3.D *Christians in Action (CIA)*

Christians in Action started in the United States on April 16th 1958, under the name of The Soul Winning and Missionary Fellowship International. (Christians in Action International since 1974.) It was a movement for winning the lost, and providing vital services at home that would help independent Pentecostal missionaries stay on the mission field.²⁹ The founder, Lee Shelley and his wife Lorraine, were both members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in America. He was in the Far-East as an Independent Missionary in 1957, when he received a vision that he was to play a role in world evangelism. He went back to America and the movement was inaugurated. CIA has headquarters in Wood Lake California.³⁰

The first missionaries were sent to Okinawa to minister to American military men stationed there. Towards the latter part of the 1960s, a major thrust was made to place missionaries in every country. Mission fields were opened in South and Central America, in Europe and Asia. Sierra Leone became the first country in Africa to receive CIA missionaries. The mission knew about Sierra Leone through one of its American Missionaries, Elgin Taylor.³¹ He was on his way to America, from Nigeria, where he found it impossible to start any

mission work, as it was during the Biafran civil war. On his way he made a brief stop in Sierra Leone. His brief stop left a very strong impression on his mind. He fell in love with the country which thus became their first field base in Africa. To date CIA has mission fields in Sierra Leone and Ghana. There were setbacks to efforts initially planned and carried out in Liberia, Nigeria, and Kenya.

The pioneer missionary to Sierra Leone was David Hall, a British man, who had worked for ten years in East Africa for the British/American Tobacco Company. When he became converted in January 1965, he resolved to become a missionary to the Africa he had grown to love. After training as a CIA missionary, he left for Sierra Leone. He arrived in Freetown on the morning of January 22, 1969. In Freetown he was helped in settling down by the Rev. Leslie Wallace, a British missionary with the Methodist Church. The latter gave him a Methodist flat, in which he stayed until the following year when he moved into a bigger flat with Philip Cheale, an American missionary who joined him in January 1970.

The two missionaries concentrated on personal evangelism, and conducted training within the mainline churches in Freetown. They established the reputation of CIA as a soul winning organisation willing to co-operate with all Christians and Churches in achieving this goal. This led to the official recognition by the CCSL in 1970, as one of its para-church movements.³² These two missionaries established a pattern that was continued by the missionaries who came after them. They set out to aid churches to become effective in personal evangelism. They conducted witnessing seminars in interested local churches. They took part in nation-wide outreach programmes, like the New Life For All Campaigns. From time to time they helped in the organisation of SU camps, and training programmes for their workers. Philip Cheale was especially active in developing the Youth For Christ work. Bible Studies were held in their flat on weekdays, but converts were encouraged to go back to their churches for Sunday Services. They were also encouraged to participate in groups like SU and YFC.³³

Caroline Rotz, a white American missionary, joined the team in 1971, and stayed on until early 1976. Bigger premises were rented at 15, Syke Street, where fellowship meetings were held. After laying the foundation, Hall and Cheale both left Freetown in 1972. By March 1973 the national training school was inaugurated offering three months basic course in soul winning and discipleship. By 1976, the number of missionaries had increased to seven. The

number of converts had also increased. The pressure was now on for the establishment of a church. In this same year CIA was registered as a church, assuming the official recognition of the government. Sunday services were instituted at the Syke Street residence of the missionaries. A member register was now available. This created a degree of permanence and stability for the CIA mission, as those amongst the converts who so desired could stay on as full members of a church. This brought psychological and religious satisfaction for the number of converts who had no solid fellowship to turn to for nurture and discipleship. Some converts had been Muslims in their pre-Christian days, and others either did not receive encouragement in their churches or had lost virtually all contact with any church.

There were also the social needs converts hoped would be met in a setting conducive to the new brand of spirituality they had adopted; needs like weddings, dedications, and funerals. The transformation from a Bible Study/para-church movement, into a church is not unique to CIA. Most of the evangelical groups in the country actually started as a Bible study/para church under a particular leader, and when there is a considerable following, as well as the above needs to be met, the group assumes a church status.³⁴

By 1977, the training school had developed and was now offering courses in leadership and discipleship. Five nationals graduated from this training school in 1980.³⁵ It was through them and the local church membership that significant changes took place: tensions developed between the missionaries and the membership when it became clear that mission policies were not addressing all the realities of ministering in a local situation. Serious questions were raised at membership meetings about the legitimacy of foreigners deciding on issues with cultural significance; issues like female circumcision, pouring of libation to the dead, and the many issues involved in marking the various rites of passage. Interestingly, when these same issues were grappled with and solutions agreed upon by the nationals themselves there were fewer problems.³⁶ This is a useful point as it favours the intra-cultural communication of the gospel. It shows that people are more comfortable with those they can identify with, those who share in the same life experiences.

The nationals were also unhappy with the mission when two of the four young single American lady missionaries who had arrived in 1974, were recalled in October 1977. This was because two of them married local men, one in 1975 and the other in 1976. The mission body recalled the two, as they had been sent to evangelise and not to get married. The

nationals who saw nothing wrong with the union, started questioning whether Christianity should not transcend all racial and cultural barriers. It should be noted that it became a policy of the mission after this not to send any more singles, but married couples, to Sierra Leone.³⁷

There was also the question of social inequality. As missionary wives started having families, they contributed less and less to the ministry, yet their Sierra Leonean counterparts were expected to continue with their contributions. Questions were thus being asked about what documents should govern the local church, and what was to be done to make nationals feel the ministry was really theirs. There was also the question of finance. Local staff were forced to recognise the disparity in social background when the economic conditions in the country worsened, and whenever salaries for workers needed re-evaluation.³⁸

Another sore point among the nationals was the policy upheld by CIA International, and firmly applied to Sierra Leone, that the training received at the CIA training school was all that was needed for ministry. This meant that national workers would not be funded by the mission if they wanted to pursue further studies, nor would they be allowed study leave if they found independent funds. The developing tension reached its climax when two Canadian couples replaced those who had gone from the United States. Unlike the earlier missionaries from the United States and Britain who had been professionals before their missionary training, the Canadians were not. There was tension as the nationals felt that the Canadians as non-professionals would not be sympathetic enough in helping to bring about a change of the training policy.³⁹

It should be noted that in 1985, when Elgin Taylor, the president of CIA International visited Sierra Leone, a meeting was held during which the nationals aired their grievances. This led to a policy reversal; there was to be a balancing of leadership with further studies. The mission would pay tuition and buy books for those wanting to further their studies, by correspondence with Fort Wayne Bible College in Indiana, USA. Those who could find independent funds to attend Bible colleges and even universities would not be hindered by the mission. The mission body had underestimated the ambition and motivation of the Sierra Leoneans. Not one of them took up the offer to do correspondence with Fort Wayne. They wanted to study not by correspondence, but with accredited universities and seminaries. At

present, virtually all the pastors and elders of CIA are university graduates, or graduates from Bible colleges and theological institutions.

The decisive and most significant factor in the history of CIA, Sierra Leone, was when on the 28th September 1985, the church membership, led by their national leaders, presented and approved a constitution that made CIA an autonomous church. This marked the beginning of an African Church quite distinct from the parent organisation. The church however does retain limited contact with the parent body in the USA, who have no say in the local organisation and administration of the church. The church became autonomous financially in 1987.

Since 1985, the church has become a vibrant church with greatly increased membership. It has expanded to include eight new branches in Freetown and the Provinces. In Freetown there is the parent church at Syke Street. The others are at Pademba Road, Kissy, Wellington, Aberdeen and Dan Street. In the provinces there is one in Bo in the Southern Province, and two in Kono in the Eastern province. The usual pattern, not just for CIA but for the various groups, is to establish a home cell/Bible study group. As the group grows, a church is created according to the needs of converts. At present the attendance at fellowship meetings in the various branches is about four thousand. Those who attend the services are mostly literates or semi-literates. There is a relatively high percentage of non-Krios and Muslim converts attending the services.⁴⁰ As it became evident to the missionaries that their role was getting fuzzier in a national church that was growing, and fast becoming independent of them, they started withdrawing. Presently there are no foreign missionaries, but only nationals who have been recognised as leaders by the mission body in the USA.

3.E *Christian Life Era Sierra Leone (CLESL)*

Christian Life Era was inaugurated on the 25th May 1990, under a young and dynamic leader Cyril Luke. He was born on 14th September 1959 to middle-class Krio parents in Freetown. In an interview, Cyril Luke stated that his encounter and experiences of God started even before he became a committed Christian. In 1966, when he was seven years of age, he had a dream in which he saw a golden light coming out of heaven. The light struck him, and he had an innate feeling that the golden light was the light of God. Since then, he

became interested in God, but not in any real or personal way. Later on he had a vision of becoming a friend of God, just like Abraham had been.

At the age of twenty-six, he had a dream in which he dreamt that he was in a church service, and the preacher's sermon was about the Christian life. He was caught in the net and knew that his life did not measure up. He responded to the preacher's altar call, and gave his life to Jesus Christ. This was the turning point for him.⁴¹

Shortly after his conversion, he received a revelation from God that he was going to use him mightily in ministering. In February 1990, God spoke to him and gave him the date and name of the ministry. He was to start on the 25th May 1990, and it was to be called Christian Life Era. The name he says depicts the fact that this is the era when Christianity must assume dominance; it was the era for Christian life and living. All Christians must be united in proclaiming the word and leading effective Christian lives. He received a specific verse as part of the revelation:

That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.
May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
John 17:21⁴²

He also received this message as part of his specific calling:

Go out and preach in the darkness. There are others who ought to be lifted up like you. Those who choose the path of light, a path of life it shall be. For those who chose darkness, there is only death in the deal.⁴³

At the time of his calling Cyril Luke was already very affluent in the society. He had wealth, position and status. He owned his own home, was married with two children, and had a very successful career with Barclays Bank Sierra Leone. He studied computer programming in England. On his return home, after a successful completion of his studies in England he was appointed computer manager of the bank in August 1989.⁴⁴ He resigned this lucrative job after seventeen years to take up God's calling.⁴⁵

He started his ministry with only twenty people, mostly his colleagues from the bank. For the first three years it operated only as an evangelistic meeting, where Bible studies, evangelism and prayer meetings were conducted. In 1993, it became a church because of the necessity for fellowship and nurturing of converts. He says that he saw the need for planting churches because of the non-availability of Bible believing churches or insufficient numbers

in relation to the size of the area, and sometimes on the basis of direct instruction from God. Through public meetings, crusades and evangelism, the church has experienced a phenomenal growth. The church now has six branches: in Freetown, at the Young Women's Christian Association building, in greater Freetown at Wellington, Goderich, Kissy, and Hastings villages; in the Southern province in Bo; and one outside of Sierra Leone, in Guinea Bissau. In the parent church which meets at the YWCA, the attendance figures average two thousand for each Sunday service. This number include members from the variuos ethnic groups, some of whom are Muslim converts. Plans are now underway for the construction of their own church building.

3.F *Jesus is Lord Ministries (JLM)*

The founder of Jesus is Lord Ministries is a Limba woman named Dora Dumbuya. She was born in Kamakwie in the Northern province, into a very strong Muslim family. She later came into contact with Christianity and renounced her faith in Islam. At the time she started her ministry she was married to a very prominent military officer, Lieutenant Colonel Kawuta Dumbuya. By virtue of her husband's position as a Limba military officer they had wealth, position and power.⁴⁶ Unfortunately the husband was killed in December 1992, accused of being involved in a plot to overthrow the military regime that had taken power from the APC, the government under which he had served.

She started attending the Bethel Temple Church in 1971, when a friend the late Mrs Alma Kanu, witnessed to her. She moved from Bethel Temple to the Deeper Life Bible Church in 1986, and became a part-time church worker, leading a Bible study group in her home at Wilberforce Barracks. It was while she was a member of Deeper Life that she received her calling from God. In 1988, she received a vision from God, in which she was dressed in a flowing garment with a veil on her head, and a cross in front of her.⁴⁷ She then became convinced that God was calling her to a special ministry. She therefore left Deeper Life Church to start her own ministry. Initially it was just Bible studies, prayer meetings, and evangelism that the ministry was concerned with. During the prayer meetings miracles were performed. People testified to being healed of diseases, and prayers for various problems were being answered. As the news spread about the 'woman of God' many more people flocked to her Wilberforce Barracks residence.⁴⁸

When the house could no longer contain the crowd flocking to her meetings, the fellowship now known as the Wilberforce Christian Fellowship, moved to St Luke's Garrison Church at Wilberforce barracks. From the church they moved to yet another bigger hall still at the barracks. In January 1990 Sunday Services were instituted to cater for the needs of the majority of converts who were from the Muslim background, and from the grassroots whom would never attend the mainline churches. Healing fellowships were still conducted on Mondays, Bible studies on Wednesdays, and Revival and Miracle hour on Fridays.

As the church fellowship expanded, land was procured on Tower Hill, and a vast church building erected. The church building was opened in December 1993. After Mami Dumbuya and her elders had prayed for two months, she was given the name the ministry was to assume, which is The Jesus is Lord Ministries. Jesus is Lord was to be her specific emphasis, as her calling is to reach out specifically to Muslims, who like herself, needed to recognise the Lordship of Jesus Christ, a point she says Muslims find difficult to comprehend.⁴⁹

The church is experiencing phenomenal growth. To date it is the largest and fastest growing evangelical church in the country, in terms of the massive structure with still more work of expansion being carried out, as well as in terms of the size of the attendance. For each Sunday Service approximately three thousand people are in attendance. On special occasions that number doubles; on one occasion they even counted eight thousand and five hundred people. There is a high percentage of non-Krios, and Muslim converts attending the JLM services.⁵⁰

4. The Teachings of the Evangelicals

The teachings of the evangelical movement are similar to a very large extent among the various groups. The differences and variations, when they do occur, are in some areas of doctrinal emphasis and regulatory religious practices. I will highlight the statement of faith of two groups, SU and CIA, which perhaps because of their clarity have been copied to varying degrees by other local groups.

4.A SU Statement of Faith

The SU Statement of Faith reads:

1. We hold that the Lord our God is one: Father Son and Holy Spirit, and that he fulfils his sovereign purposes in creation, revelation, redemption, judgement, and the coming of his kingdom - by calling out from the world a people united to himself and to each other in love. We acknowledge that though God made us in his own likeness and image, conferring on us dignity and worth and enabling us to respond to himself, we now are members of a fallen race; we have sinned and come short of his glory.

We believe that the father has shown us his holy love in giving Jesus Christ, his only Son, for us, while through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to his wrath and condemnation; and has shown his grace by putting sinners right with himself when they place their trust in his Son.

We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God; as truly human, born of the virgin Mary; as Servant, sinless, full of grace and truth; as only Mediator and Saviour, dying on the cross in our place, representing us to God, redeeming us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin; as victor over Satan and all his forces, rising from death with a glorious body, being taken up to be with his Father, one day returning personally in glory and judgement to establish his kingdom.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement; who makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that they must now turn to Christ in repentance, and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ; who through the new birth makes us partake in the life of the risen Christ, and who is present within all believers, illuminating their minds to grasp the truth of Scripture, producing in them his fruit, granting to them his gifts, and empowering them for service in the world.

2. The Scriptures

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are God-breathed, since their writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; hence are fully trustworthy in all that they affirm; and our highest authority for faith and life.

3. The Church and its Mission

We recognise the Church as the body of Christ, held together and growing up in him; both as a total fellowship throughout the world, and as the local congregation in which believers gather.

We acknowledge the commission of Christ to proclaim the Good News to all people, making them disciples, and teaching them to obey him;

We acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbours; resulting in service to the church and society, in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows, in proclaiming liberty from every kind of oppression; and in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world...until he comes again.⁵¹

4.B *CIA Statement of Faith*

The CIA Statement of Faith reads:

1. The Bible is the verbally inspired word of God without error as originally written. It is the complete revelation of God's will for men, and is the only standard of Christian faith and conduct, absolute in its authority.
2. God is the infinite personal spirit, perfect and holy, who has revealed Himself as a trinity in unity, existing eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, and yet but one.
3. Jesus Christ is both true God and true man. From eternal pre-existence with His Father. He was incarnated by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, and died upon the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world. He rose from the dead in the body in which He was crucified, and ascended into heaven in that body glorified. He is now in Heaven, at His Father's right hand, interceding as our High Priest,. He will come again to earth a second time, personally, bodily, and visibly, to set up, His kingdom, and to judge the living and the dead.
4. Man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin through disobedience, thereby bringing upon himself both physical and spiritual death. All men are sinful, both by nature and by action, are separated from God, and can only be forgiven and restored to fellowship with Him through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.
5. Salvation is provided only by grace, as a free gift of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. Those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, become children of God, and receive the gift of eternal life.
6. It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be sanctified wholly, thereby being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, receiving power for holy living, effective service, and fruitful witness. This is both a crisis and a progressive experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion.

7. The church is the Body of Christ, consisting of all born-again believers. Christ is the head of this Body, whose members have been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the gospel to all nations. The local church is a body of believers who are joined together for the worship of God, for edification through the word of God, for prayer, fellowship, and the proclamation of the gospel, and for observance of the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's supper.

8. There shall be a bodily resurrection of all men. For the unrepentant and unbelievers, a resurrection to eternal conscious torment, but for the repentant believer a resurrection, with a glorified body, to everlasting blessedness in God's presence.

As can be seen from the statements of faith, the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone puts emphasis on the literal interpretation of the Bible, which is considered to be absolute in its supremacy. Emphasis is also on the power of Jesus Christ to forgive, heal and deliver, and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification. There is also the need for personal conviction of, and conversion from, sin.⁵²

The various groups within the movement hold Bible studies each week, and members of the various groups are encouraged to learn memory verses, particularly the promises in the Bible. They are to be aware of the authority of the believer and the power they can exercise in Jesus name. The memory verses are to be used against the devil, and to challenge believers to claim the promises of God. Biblical teachings are often backed up with personal testimonies that make them relevant to most situations; for instance the teaching about tithes and offerings in Malachi 3, which has economic implications for the groups. Tithes, offerings and contributions form the major source of funds for the various groups. Bible passages on giving, are used in emphasising the point that if you do not rob God of what is his, then he would not allow the devil to rob from you. Instead you will experience physical as well as spiritual well-being. Point Six of the CIA Standards of Church Membership, given to those wishing to become church members, reads; 'In order to maintain spiritual excellence and faithful participation in the church, the giving of tithes and offerings into the church (1 Corinthians 6:2) must be met'.

Emphasis is on the measure of giving which determines the measure of receiving. The idea is that even though material prosperity comes from God, yet individuals can hinder or allow this prosperity by their measure of giving. This giving is not just limited to finance, but includes the giving of time and ability to the service of the various groups and the

community as a whole. Members have a moral obligation to engage in worthwhile activities, and to pursue their careers 'as unto the Lord'. These have socio-economic implications, not only for evangelicals, but for the country. Most of the groups have volunteers who help with various jobs; for instance, one of the basic working principles of SU is to have a few staff but many voluntary workers and helpers who actually carry out the work. These volunteers serve in various capacities ranging from the National Council and Ex-committee members, to sponsors of the SU groups; camp officers and committee members, and SU agents who help in promoting and selling Bible reading notes. The volunteers also form the major source from which SU gets their prayer and financial support.⁵³ The various groups also have lots of volunteers who do odd jobs like cleaning, painting and decorating. They have evangelism and prayer teams, Sunday school teachers, welfare committees, cooks, - all at no cost. This is not only good savings for the groups, who are self supporting; it also promotes the feeling of participating in a community (*kabudu*). There is shared responsibility and everyone has a vital and complimentary role to play in enhancing the kingdom of God.

Due to the teaching of not robbing God of your time and ability, believers are encouraged to live an exemplary Christian life, both within and outside of the group. Evangelicals in the country are generally renowned as pace setters in matters of discipline and good morals. From my interviews and conversations with various individuals in the movement, they teach that there are certain moral standards that members should observe, such as: going to work on time, and giving of their best. They should not offer or accept bribes. They should not steal or cheat. Those who are students must strive to achieve excellence. Adherence to these principles, they say, is a step in the right direction for a society where bribery and corruption have become institutionalised.

These very high standards required from members are emphasised in their teaching and preaching. For example, in a Sunday service held on 21st April 1996, Mami Dumbuya announced that she would rather die than compromise her faith in God. She believes that if the believer does not compromise, then God will release his power into every aspect of life for the believer, not just in finance but in health. The result would be that signs and wonders would accompany the believer.⁵⁴ High standards of morality consistent with traditional values in Sierra Leone are taught and upheld by the movement. The leadership team in the various groups must set the example by not committing adultery or fornication. Failure to

comply often leads to suspension in the first instance and expulsion for persistency. CLESL includes in their statement of faith: 'We believe in sanctity so that those who are true followers of our Lord Jesus Christ must live righteous and holy lives'.⁵⁵ CIA puts it this way: 'An exemplary Christian Life both within and outside of the church', (Matthew 5:16).⁵⁶

5. *Relationships within the Movement*

There is a powerful sense of community among evangelicals in the country which may be described as *kabudu*. They have similar teachings and activities, and mobility of members. Emphasis is on Evangelism, personal commitment, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and miracles and healing. Believers see themselves as part of a unique international movement, with the cohesive factor being their common religious experience. In the country, the expression of unity is strongly felt in situations where born again individuals and the born again community confront the broader society. This sends out messages of a unified group to outsiders. The practice of proclaiming one's membership of the born-again community also tends to promote a born-again identity over and above a sectarian one. What David Stoll describes about Latin America, also holds true for Sierra Leone:

The conversion experience of being 'born again' through an individual act of repentance and submission - 'giving your life to Christ' - is not only the doctrinal cornerstone of all churches, the rallying point of unification efforts, the term used by outsiders to identify believers, but also denotes the central theme of redemption and transformation, on both personal and structural level.⁵⁷

The various groups all have a similar interpretation of the imminent return of Jesus; for CIA, this return would take place after the world has been reached with the gospel. This implies not just the geographical areas, but the various people groupings of the world. Due to this fact, there is an urgency of reaching the world with the gospel before Christ returns. The name 'Christians in Action' actually depicts this emphasis. Witnessing and evangelism are part of the church's regular programme: 'Winning the lost across the street and around the world' was the vision of the founder, and still remains the cornerstone of CIA's endeavours.⁵⁸ The church conducts a week long seminar on Soul Winning each year, during which people are taught how to become effective witnesses. Action night, a time for witnessing and follow up, is held every Tuesday. During this time one of the materials used is a tract printed by them called *The Five Point Plan For Real Life*. Witnessing is not limited

to one class of the society, it is taken to the upper and lower stratum. The responsibility is on every Christian, whether ordained or lay, to evangelise.

The leader of CLESL also notes that, when he had his vision initially, it was to sensitise Christians to their responsibility to live holy lives in the face of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.⁵⁹ They conduct a series of meetings each month entitled the 'End Time Awakening'. This meeting is held every last Wednesday of each month. The teachings are mostly from the book of revelation on how Christians are to be prepared for this event. CLESL also has an evangelism team responsible for organising open air meetings, door to door, and person to person evangelism every week.

Mami Dumbuya also senses the urgency of reaching out to people, particularly Muslims, as the end draws near. She sees herself as an instrument sent by God to proclaim to them that Jesus is Lord, and he will soon return to take his own. Therefore, they must accept him as she herself has done. However she does not limit the message to just Muslims, as everyone should have the opportunity of making a decision. JLM also have an evangelism team, and organise witnessing outreach programmes.⁶⁰

The various groups come together to organise crusades and rallies, all emphasising the need for people to become born again before Jesus returns. They all see themselves as instruments of God to proclaim his power to the country. Miracles are proclaimed and believed in. At the entrance to the JLM, there is a very imposing sign in bold print with a picture of an open Bible. The sign reads 'Welcome To Jesus Is Lord Ministry. Expect A Miracle'. In their Crusade '96, the main theme was on the Power of God to heal the nation. Similarly Cyril Luke planned a revival for the 19th - 29th May 1997, at the YWCA new hall. To quote from the poster:

These are power explosive experiences with the Holy Spirit you can not afford to miss.

By the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ signs and wonders will follow you after these revivals, in a more dramatic way.

bring the Sick, Blind, Deaf, Dumb, and all manners of diseased persons, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be gracious to heal.⁶¹

Even though there is unity among the various groups in the movement, there are areas of divergence, which gives every movement a unique flavour: Whilst acknowledging that disease can sometimes be traced to sin and the influence of Satan and his demons, CIA's

preoccupation with deliverance services is not to the same intensity as some other groups.⁶² One point about CIA is the belief in the combination of prayers and medicine; they believe that doctors can also cure using their God given abilities. When healing by miracles occurs people are encouraged to have a confirmation made by a medical practitioner.⁶³

Cyril Luke, unlike CIA, sees the operation of demons in the physical realm causing physical, emotional and psychological problems for people as a reality that needs to be dealt with.⁶⁴ So important is this issue that it is included in his ministry's statement of faith. The fifth point in CLESL statement of faith reads: 'We believe in the power of God to heal the sick and deliver the demon possessed/oppressed through the prayer of the faithful in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Deliverance, according to Cyril Luke, is 'the getting rid, or setting free from the things that weigh down'.⁶⁵ He holds deliverance meetings on two levels: The first level is for the believer, who might be oppressed by demons because of covenants the person or somebody else might have entered into with some demon on his or her behalf. Some of the covenants include parental and ancestral covenants sometimes involving blood letting and other sacrifices, personal involvement during initiation ceremonies and visiting of diviners and prayer houses for reasons like barrenness, ill health and job opportunities. Even though now the individual is a Christian and therefore owned by Jesus, yet the demons do not want to let go so easily. So while they have no hold over their souls they make trouble for them by oppressing them both physically and emotionally.

The second level is deliverance for those who are not Christians, and are possessors of demons. Before they can switch allegiance to Jesus, they need deliverance. Some need deliverance from psychological bondage - the trapping of their own minds that are caused by the spirit of fear. He however points out that he tries to maintain a healthy balance in his ministry, so deliverance is only a small aspect of his ministry. He holds deliverance crusades as and when God leads him.⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that the African awareness of the spirit realm and the supernatural forces at work for good or ill is at play here. The difference is that the spirits in the traditional religion, who are not all necessarily evil, all now become evil spirits or demons as far as the evangelicals are concerned.

There are also some members of the medical profession who share the view that certain forms of illnesses are demon-related, and therefore cannot simply be treated by hospital medicine. For instance, most born-again nurses are members of the Hospital Christian

fellowship. Sometimes they witness to and encourage patients to seek deliverance as well as cure their physical ailments. They also witness to their colleagues, so that the awareness is created in them that their ability is God-given and must be used for his glory. Their emphasis is serving people instead of money. This way they do make a difference in a health system where the focus has shifted over the years from people-concern to financial gains.⁶⁷

The evangelicals all believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the trinity. He was sent to them as comforter and teacher. Yet they all express different emphases of the operation of the Holy Spirit. CIA does not stress the speaking in tongues as the necessary sign of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. While every individual experience is accepted on its own merit, people are encouraged to use tongues only if they can interpret for the benefit of all. This makes their services not highly emotional even though it is very African with drums, clapping and the combination of Creole and English. They place emphasis on the Holy Spirit empowering Christians for holy living, and effective service, both within the church and the Nation. Point six of the CIA statement of faith reads: 'It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be sanctified wholly, thereby being separate from sin and the power of the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, receiving power for holy living, effective service, and fruitful witness. This is both a crisis and a progressive experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion'. During CLESL and JLM meetings tongues are frequently used, particularly during the first part of the service, which is the praise and worship. The meetings could become highly emotional and sometimes almost disorderly, but the leaders always restore order by changing the chorus or simply calling for order and silence for prayers to be said. During the speaking in tongues sometimes messages are received. One person could say something in tongues and then, still under the influence of the Spirit, translate the message into Creole for all to understand or somebody else does the interpretation.⁶⁸

The groups see true experience as coming from the Holy Spirit. It is the very nature of the Holy Spirit to challenge ordinary men and women to do extra-ordinary things for God. While most of the leaders in the movement might have attended university, college, or seminary, a small percentage of people are uneducated, but claim to being used mightily of God. They attribute their calling to the power of the Holy Spirit. Once they start their ministry they are encouraged to go to Bible school, so that they would be balanced in the use of the gift.⁶⁹ For instance, there is a lady at CIA, Matty, a semi-literate. She comes from a

Mende background. Her mother when alive was a *sowe* (head of a Mende *bondo* bush). When Matty was about nine months old, her mother had offered her as a sacrifice for fame. Her hands and feet had been tied up with a red cloth containing cowrie shells and she was left to die in the bush. She was discovered and rescued by a farmer.⁷⁰ She has fostered an effective prayer ministry, and can read and quote scriptures from the Bible. Initially she was unable to read, but now she sees the Holy Spirit as her teacher, using her as an illiterate to confound the wisdom of the wise. She is respected by her church (CIA), which recognises her gift as genuine. She was commissioned by the elders who laid hands on her and prayed for her in front of the church.⁷¹ Matty's background helps her to address African issues such as witchcraft. A lot of people go to her for prayers for deliverance, barrenness, jobs, or seeking partners . There are some other clients she visits in their homes who because of their affluence would rather remain anonymous. She even has people she prays for overseas. I was privileged in interviewing several individuals who are very positive about the changes brought about in their lives because of Matty's prayers. These included the acquisition of visas for USA and UK after several failed attempts, jobs, pregnancies, witchcraft confessions and deliverances, success in failed marriages and cures for ill health.⁷²

6. *Relationship with other Groups*

The research I conducted revealed that the evangelicals make a distinction between a professing Christian and a committed Christian. Those who are professing do not fit into the same pattern of experience and behaviour as the born again. The former might be church goers but they have not yet experienced the newness that comes from surrendering one's life to Christ. The controversy between those who are born again and those who are not stretches across a wide terrain of thought and action. While those born again are concerned to defend the Bible as uniquely trustworthy and authoritative, those the evangelicals refer to as nominal Christians on the other hand, want to be able to reinterpret it in fresh terms. The controversy also includes the question of the use of leisure, the entertainment activities held in the church premises, and the role of the Christian in society on the whole. This is an issue since the mainline churches allow alcoholic parties to be held in the church premises in the form of bazaars and luncheon sales. During the opening and dedication of a new church premise the traditional *awujoh*, including the pouring of libation, is carried out.⁷³ Most churches have various conclaves that tend to be concerned with entertainment. After Sunday

services members of the sides-men and sides-women organisations meet in pubs, or they take it in turns to meet in the various homes for food and alcoholic beverages.⁷⁴

The evangelicals oppose not only the mainline churches, but also the African Independent Churches. These churches are generally referred to as Adejobi, which is the name of the first person to start an African independent church of the prophet healing type in the country in March 1947.⁷⁵ These churches are regarded by them as direct instruments of the devil. The evangelicals see these churches as having connections with traditional beliefs and rituals through the spirits which they invoke and the animal sacrifices which they offer. These are all considered to be demonic activities by the evangelicals. Evangelicals are very quick to distinguish between the evangelical movement and these churches: 'The evangelical ministry is a Bible believing and teaching ministry'.⁷⁶ JLM which has a lot of grassroots in its midst, emphasise that JLM is a Bible teaching ministry; '*Dis noto Spirichualis choch. Wi no de bon kandul, or churay, or yus oli wata.* (symbols used by the Adejobi churches) *Wi no de ep God yaso. Nar di baybul nomo wi de yus.* A translation of this reads: 'This is not a spiritualist church. We do not burn candles, or use incense or use holy water. We do not help God in this church. We only use the Bible'.⁷⁷

The prophets of the independent churches are regarded not just by the evangelicals, but most interestingly by some other members of the society as 'prophets of doom'. The prophets are thought to capitalise on the African fear of witchcraft and other anti-social agencies operational in society to make money. They always prophesy that the disaster or ailments of a given individual are due to the influence of witches. Sometimes they fragment families by their accusations.⁷⁸ Members have to engage in prolonged periods of fasting and struggling on the beaches but to no effect.⁷⁹ The evangelicals condemn them as concentrating on useless sacrifices, since it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to atone for human sin: only the once and for all sacrifice of Christ can achieve this.⁸⁰ One former prophet of the Aladura church gave his testimony after conversion, as a means of warning people, not to become involved with the Adejobi churches. He claims that all activity of the Adejobi churches are purely demonic; evil spirits are invoked, and they also use books on occultism from the East, particularly from India. By just reciting they could get members into a trance. Some female members have been sexually assaulted in this way.⁸¹ Unlike the mainline churches, it is compulsory for converts from the Adejobi churches to make a clean break from these churches. Sometimes they need deliverance, and they must never again attend

any of the Adejobi meetings. Converts must renounce every association they had ever had with the Adejobi fellowship.⁸²

With regards to the mainline churches, the evangelicals have set themselves up against them as a strong opposing force. The evangelicals are of the view that the mainline churches have shifted from evangelism, to materialism, and spiritual complacency. One observer notes in *West Africa* that the mainline churches:

Are suffering from spiritual diarrhoea, and their ecumenism is only theoretical equivocationThere is fierce fighting among the clergy for high office...It is not surprising that the new evangelical churches are winning adherents from the other denominations.⁸³

There is a degree of intolerance and a very strong reaction against those ministers of the mainline churches who evangelicals allege lead people astray, by their sexual immorality, financial impropriety, indulgence and blasphemy from their pulpits. These are seen as not only leading people astray, but fragmenting the Christian Community, and undermining its interests in the face of Islam and other threats. The EFSL was formed as a result of this opposition as CCSL was deemed to be unevangelical in its perspective.

The condemnation of mainline churches can be very vocal and open. One committee member of the Anglican church conference told the Anglican conference outright that the ministers were responsible for people quitting the church. He told them that:

People are not impressed with the lifestyle of various ministers. Like a butterfly moves about from flower to flower finding nectar, so people would move away from the established churches in search of the true gospel. What people are interested in is a transformation that is like the complete metamorphosis of the butterfly, and not like the crocodile which only sheds its skin but remains the same.⁸⁴

During the seventh annual thanksgiving service, Mami Dumbuya based her sermon on the text in Daniel chap 3. She reserved her most scathing remarks for the mainline churches, and their ministers, who accuse her of snatching their members. She says they are oblivious of the damage they cause by the compromises they make. The fault she says is theirs and not hers. Their compromises are an abomination to the living God. So why blame disillusioned church members for seeking satisfaction where the gospel is being preached? She says 'I would rather die than compromise my God'.⁸⁵

It must be stressed that not all ministers of the mainline churches come under condemnation. Some of them are also evangelicals, who are very much opposed to the ills of the church. To mention a few: the director of EFSL is an Anglican, and the chairman of one of the SU

committees is an Anglican canon. There are ministers and lay persons actively involved in crusades and other evangelistic activities. A lunch-time fellowship is held in every office where an evangelical is to be found: a clear indication that the movement does not belong to any one denomination.⁸⁶

The evangelicals are making an impact on the contemporary church situation. Those who stay on in the mainline churches are becoming instruments of change. They are forcing the mainline churches to reform to meet the challenge; For instance, the third annual Anglican Diocesan Youth Camp held at Fourah Bay College from 2-8 August 1993, attracted participants from all the Anglican churches in the country. It was unique in the sense that, among other things, strategies to make the church more attractive to the youths were discussed. The main speaker for the occasion was Raymond Attawai, a minister with CIA, on the theme 'Living as one in Christ'. Campers testify of being positively spiritually refreshed.⁸⁷ The Anglican church now encourages the playing of guitars, drums and other musical instruments other than the organ, the singing of choruses, and sharing of testimonies at its evening services.

There are also innovations by the Methodists. At Wesley Methodist Church the church has made what has been described by members as a positive stride in the introduction of a contemporary form of worship referred to as 'Charismatic Service'. This service was inaugurated on 26th May 1996 at 11.30 am. This came about after six years of prayer and deliberation by the women's intercessory prayer group. They were concerned about the lack of biblical teaching and the spiritual stagnation of the church which was driving members, particularly the youths, elsewhere. With the charismatic service the youths now take an active part, as it appeals to them. The church now has regular Bible studies, and every fourth Sunday, members from other churches are invited to participate in the service. One leader notes: 'It has been a wonderful time of refreshing as the aim of uniting the Methodists is being fulfilled every time we meet to study the word of God and fellowship'.⁸⁸

Some evangelicals from the mainline churches are members of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Sierra Leone chapter. This is part of the world wide movement, founded by a Pentecostal layman, to organise Christian Fellowship for those who do not feel comfortable in a church setting. There is a sister movement known as Women's Aglow. In Sierra Leone these movements attract the affluent in the society.

7. Conclusion of the chapter

The origins of the evangelical movement can be seen as stemming from the rising concern that Christianity was proving to be superficial and inadequate in its presentation of Christ as the source of all physical and spiritual healing within the society, as well as in addressing the disruption of community in contemporary Sierra Leone. This movement is a new and radical development within the nation's Christian heritage. It appeals directly to the Bible for its norms and inspiration. The movement, however, addresses more than the growing concerns about the superficiality of Christianity, it is also a cultural development which reflects *kabudu* generally in the country.

¹ Peel, J. 'The Christianisation of African society', in E.W. Fasholé-Luke, et al, *Christianity in Independent Africa*, London: Rex Collings, 1978, p.445.

² Walls, A.F. 'Towards Understanding Africa's Place in Christian History' in J.S. Pobee, (ed.), *Religion in a pluralistic Society*, London: E.J. Brill, 1976, p.180.

³ Fyfe, C. & A.F. Walls, (eds.) *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1996, p.2.

cf. Walls, A.F. 'Christianity in the non-Western World: A study in the social nature of Christian expansion', *Studies in World Christianity* 1(1) 1995, p.25.

⁴ Hackett, R. 'Enigma Variations: The New Religious Movements in Nigeria Today', in A.F. Walls & Wilbert Shanks, (eds.), *Exploring New Religious Movements: Essays in Honour of Harold Turner*, Elkhart, IN: Mission Focus, 1990, pp. 121-142, for typology of new religious movements.

⁵ Wright, D. et al, (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, p.306.

Also Bebbington, D.W. *Evangelicalism in modern Britain*, London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1989, p.3.

⁶ I have written a short article on the evangelicals, entitled 'Charismatics and Community', in John Parratt, (ed.) *A Reader In African Christian Theology*, New edn., London: SPCK, 1997, pp. 129-137.

⁷ Interviews with several evangelicals over the period 1992-1996 reveal this viewpoint. See also M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 2nd edition, London: Allen & Unwin, 1976, for an example of how diligence, discipline, moderation and success are crucial not only in business but all areas of life.

⁸ *Target 2000 Evangelistic and Church Survey Research Programme: Greater Freetown Area*, Freetown: EFSL publication, 1990, p.1.

⁹ *ibid.* p. 1ff.

¹⁰ Gifford, P. 'Africa Shall Be Saved': An appraisal of Reinhard Bonnke's pan-African crusade, in *Journal of Religion In Africa*, Vol. 17, (1), 1987, Netherlands: Leiden & Brill, 1987, p.63-64.

¹¹ *ibid.* p.63. The estimate of 16,000 a day is attributed to David Barrett: in David Lamb, *The Africans*, London: Methuen, Rev.ed. 1985, p.143.

¹² 'The Mother of All Crusades', *Sierra Leone Daily Mail*, 14 December 1991, p.1

¹³ *Revival Report A/92E*, p.8, Freetown: CCSL publication.

¹⁴ These reports were heard all over Freetown, particularly in evangelical circles, and was confirmed by those I spoke with after the rebel war intensified.

¹⁵ One of my students James Alpha (not his real name) managed to escape from the rebels after two years in captivity. He confirmed that they were using mystical powers.

¹⁶ The *tamaborohs* and the *kamajors* are made up of traditional hunters, and other men and women believed to possess supernatural powers. Their conscription as a fighting force started during the NPRC rule. They were conscripted and sent into battle to counteract the rebels reputed use of witchcraft and other mystical powers. *Globe*, 22 January 1993, p.4

¹⁷ Testimony of Evelyn Wilson, Nursing sister in charge at the Kabala Government Hospital in the North, reported in *The Catalyst Magazine*, July -September 1995, p.3 Freetown: Christian Literature Crusade Bookshop.

¹⁸ People specifically mentioned Bonnke's crusade and his prayers for the nation as a turning point.

¹⁹ Wright, D. et al (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History*, p.763.

²⁰ The CMS established the Sierra Leone Grammar School as the first secondary school in the whole of West Africa in 1845. They established the Annie Walsh Memorial School as the girls secondary in 1849.

²¹ The Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

²² Extracted from a 'Brief highlight of SU Sierra Leone', compiled by Donald Manley, General Secretary of SU Sierra Leone, November 1996.

Interview with Donald Manley on 23, 24 December 1996.

²³ e-mail communications with Rev. Donald Kinde, on 11, 16 February 1999. He served as an American Wesleyan Missionary to Sierra Leone for twenty-one years, beginning in 1966. He served in various capacities, including teaching at the Bible college.

²⁴ Interview with John Kamara, Director of planning and development Wesleyan Sierra Leone, on 20 May 1997.

²⁵ Information on EFSL, obtained from interviews with Liz Mensah in 15 April 1997, Aiah Foday on 6 May 1997, John Kamara on 20 May 1997, and e-mail communications with Rev. Kinde in Minneapolis, on 11 & 16 February 1999.

²⁶ e-mail communication with Rev. Kinde on 11 February 1999.

²⁷ Interview with John Kamara on 20 May 1997, and Rev. Kinde, on 11 February 1999.

²⁸ Rev. Y.M. Kroma was a member of William Tolbert's government in neighbouring Liberia, when in 1982 after a successful coup, Samuel K. Doe took over. He arrested Kroma as well as other members of the Tolbert government. At this time Kroma was president of the AWM in Liberia. The latter were very instrumental in negotiating his release, after which he returned to his home country of Sierra Leone.

²⁹ Interview with Philip Cheale, on 3 June 1990. He was the second CIA Missionary to Sierra Leone, and first manager of the Christian Literature Crusade Bookshop in Freetown,

³⁰ 'Historical Survey of CIA', compiled by Raymond Attawai, National Superintendent of CIA, in 1991.

³¹ Elgin Taylor was one of the first two candidates enrolled in the CIA training programme in 1958. He is now the president of CIA missions international.

³² The Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL), is affiliated to the World Council of Churches (WCC).

³³ Interview with Philip Cheale, on 3 June 1990.

³⁴ Matthews Ojo notes the same development among the Charismatics in Nigeria. *Journal of Religion In Africa*, vol. 18, 1988, p.152.

³⁵ History of CIA, compiled by Raymond Attawai in 1991.

³⁶ Informal conversations with several members in September 1990 after the CIA membership meeting, and other members and elders on 24, 26 April 1997.

³⁷ Conversations held, and observations made by me during this period.

³⁸ During discussions with some of the CIA elders who prefer to remain anonymous, I was told of one missionary whose lifestyle was far better in Sierra Leone than even in his home country. This I was told was very evident in the fact that when he went home on furlough and the financial support ceased, he had to do odd jobs to survive. Interview conducted on 22 April 1997.

³⁹ This is contrary to the report given to Robert Smith as an outsider, that relationships with the missionaries were harmonious. See Robert Smith, 1995, p.552.

⁴⁰ The relatively high percentage of non-Krios and Muslim converts for CIA, and the other groups are significant as they buttress the point made earlier on that the evangelicals are extending their ministry to include other ethnic groups apart from the Krios who had traditionally embraced Christianity. The evangelicals are catering for the other ethnic groups, and the unevangelised.

⁴¹ 'Focus on Cyril Luke', *The Catalyst*, April - June 1995, p.5.

⁴² Interview with Cyril Luke, on 20th December 1996. See the *New International Version of The Bible* for Bible quotation.

⁴³ Interview with Cyril Luke on 20 December 1996.

⁴⁴ Unlike the situation noted elsewhere, most born again leaders in the country like Cyril Luke do not seem to be motivated by the quest for wealth, power or status as they already had them, but from the genuine belief that they have been called by God to serve him. For the view on wealth being a motivation see Matthews Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministries: A case study of the charismatic in Southern Nigeria', *Journal of Religion In Africa*, xviii, 1988, p. 152f. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, pp. 334ff. For the view on a genuine conviction and religious response see Cyril Okorocha, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa: The case of The Igbo of Nigeria*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1987.

⁴⁵ He suffered loss of earnings by his resignation at that point, because he needed just three more years in the job and he would have qualified for optional pensions.

⁴⁶ This was the time when the army was singled out for special favours by the then APC government.

⁴⁷ Seventh Annual Thanksgiving Service Cassette Recording, 21 April 1996.

⁴⁸ In 1989 at Dr Bell's surgery, informal conversation with a group of patients was centred on this remarkable woman, Mami Dumbuya. They were encouraging other patients to visit her for prayers to relieve them of barrenness and other gynaecological problems.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mrs Dora Dumbuya on 25 April 1997.

⁵⁰ Interview with Mrs Frances Boiro, assistant pastor of JLM on 13 May 1997.

⁵¹ This statement was adopted by the Scripture Union International Council at Harare, Zimbabwe in May 1985.

⁵² CIA Statement of Faith, printed by CIA, Freetown.

⁵³ 'Brief highlight on SU Sierra Leone', compiled by Donald Manley, General Secretary of the SU Sierra Leone.

⁵⁴ Seventh annual thanksgiving service, cassette recording, 21 April 1996.

⁵⁵ CLESL Standard of Faith, point 4.

⁵⁶ CIA Standards of Church membership, point 3.

⁵⁷ Stoll, D. *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1990, p.5 Ojo, M. 'Charismatics in Nigeria', p. 152f, Dovlo, E. 'A Comparative Overview of Independent Churches and Charismatic

Ministries in Ghana', *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. 2, December 1992, p.63f.

⁵⁸ Quoted by Elgin Taylor in *CIA Church 2000 and Beyond*, CIA Office publication, WoodLake CA, 1997.

⁵⁹ Interview with Cyril Luke on 20 December 1996.

⁶⁰ Interviews with Cyril Luke, 16 April 1997, Frances Boiro, 13 May 1997, & Olu Thomas, 14 May 1997.

⁶¹ Posters for seventh anniversary celebrations at the YWCA New Hall, 19th - 29th May 1997.

⁶² This is clearly the case because CIA had been imported from the USA.

⁶³ The principle of go and show thyself to a priest is operational, only that instead of a priest it is the medical practitioner. Luke 5:14.

⁶⁴ It is significant that Cyril Luke's ministry with its local origins recognises the African issue and addresses it.

⁶⁵ Interview with Cyril Luke on 20th December 1996.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Interviews and informal discussions with Adelaide Cole, Boi Nenneh, Teresa Bagrey, and other nurses of the 'Hospital Christian Fellowship', on 22 April 1997.

⁶⁸ During one CLESL service I attended on the 11th May 1997 there were three messages and interpretations. Two were an affirmation from God that he would use Cyril Luke mightily and that he was with him. The other was an encouragement for all present that even though there were more difficult days ahead, God will not leave his children desolate.

⁶⁹ This is quite contrary to what Gifford says about this stream of Christianity caring little about theology. P. Gifford, 'Africa Shall Be Saved': An Appraisal Of Reinhard Bonnke's Pan-African Crusade, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 17, (1), 1987, p.82.

⁷⁰ Interview with Matty on 26 July 1995.

⁷¹ She was commissioned on 7 August 1994.

⁷² Interviews and participation in several meetings during the period August 1994-October 1995, and in April -May 1997.

⁷³ One notable example is when members of St John's Church Brookfields opened their newly renovated church building.

⁷⁴ This is not limited to just one mainline church. It is very widespread in Freetown.

⁷⁵ Primate E.O.A. Adejobi came to Freetown from Nigeria to establish a branch of the Church of the Lord Aladura in 1947. His name is now used in general reference to the spiritualist churches, even those having no connection with his Aladura church.

⁷⁶ Every evangelical I had a conversation with on this issue made this point.

⁷⁷ Seventh Annual Thanksgiving Service 21 April 1996.

⁷⁸ The phrase prophets of doom is widely used in Freetown by people who are not necessarily evangelicals. I had informal discussions on three occasions with different groups of people present at my friend's pub in Campbell Street, Freetown on 28 November 1992. They used this same phrase in the course of our conversation. Examples of how they had succeeded in destroying families were given. One particular one involved a family I would refer to as Konte family. The man is an Adejobi member who is having an affair with one of their prophetesses. He was told that not only is his wife a witch, but he must stop eating food prepared by her, or sleeping with her. The man effectively moved out of the house leaving the wife to cope with three small children. One of those involved in the discussion made an oath that if his wife ever gets involved with the Adejobi he would take a cutlass to the church and chop off her head as well as that of their 'false' prophets.

⁷⁹ During a conversation with a lady, Yele, on 5 June 1995, I was told that once in 1993, she had a terrible stomach ailment. An Adejobi prophet prescribed a seven days period of

fasting and beach struggles to destroy her enemies. She paid the prophet to fast and struggle for her as she couldn't cope with the physical struggles. However she says it was not effective, she was not cured and had to visit a medical doctor.

⁸⁰ Hebrews 10:4-6 quoted by Agnes Davies in an interview on 3 May 1997.

⁸¹ Testimony given by Richard Cole at CIA in August 1979. He gave a specific example of an incident which happened in Bo town. A young lady went into trance when alone with a prophet who was praying for her. She was sexually assaulted in the state of trance. She woke up in the process. She pressed charges against the man who was arrested and later convicted.

⁸² Some evangelicals pointed out that this clean break was necessary because of the strong belief of demonic influence in the spiritualist churches.

⁸³ 'The way forward for Sierra Leone', *West Africa*, 19th February 1979, p.281.

⁸⁴ Conversation with Dr Bell, a gynaecologist on 20 May 1995, after a paper he presented at a seminar held for leaders of the Anglican church.

⁸⁵ Seventh Annual Thanksgiving Service Cassette Recording.

⁸⁶ I participated in one at the Auditor General's Department, Pademba Road on 17 August 1991.

⁸⁷ 'Diocesan Youth Fellowship Camp '93', *The Catalyst*, July - September 1993, p.6.

⁸⁸ 'Innovations At Wesley Methodist Church' *The Catalyst*, Nov. - Dec. 1996, p.30.

Chapter Six

The Evangelicals and Community

This chapter follows on from the last chapter, and is an examination of how, if at all, the evangelical movement seems to be fulfilling the abiding sense of a need for *kabudu* in Sierra Leone. To be examined are what the perceived needs and benefits of such a movement for the society are, by a discussion of its relation to tradition, and the movement's fulfilment of other religious, social and economic needs for participants, as well as the wider public.

1. *Relation to traditional values*

The relationship between the evangelical movement and tradition in Sierra Leone is of vital importance, as this is what gives the movement its African distinctiveness. The relation to tradition is also what creates the appeal for many individuals as they try to identify with a movement that provides an experience of community that is linked in some ways to traditional values. In *Vision* newspaper an article captioned 'Time for religion' notes that there is a rise of religious activities in the country because: 'Sierra Leoneans have a profound sense of loss. They believe that national redemption means reviving the values that once prevailed in community and public life'.¹ This statement implies that people want to see revival of traditional values, the kind of values that created and maintained *kabudu* - that feeling of belonging, and identification with other individuals. This must of necessity include religious and moral inspirations.

The relationship between the evangelical movement and tradition on the one hand represents a continuation and enrichment of traditional values, on the other hand it leads to aspects of discontinuity. The continuity and enrichment is due to the fact that they both deal with the same genuine concerns and preoccupation of the people. Referring to Christianity in Africa in the 1990s, Andrew Walls notes that the continuity between Christianity and tradition is due in large measure to continuing worldviews, the application of the material of the Christian tradition to already existing 'African Maps' of the Universe. He argues further that 'what happens in African Christianity is only intelligible in the light of what has gone before in the African religious story'.² As a part of Christianity in the country, this observation is applicable to the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone.

The conflict between tradition and evangelicals arises as evangelicals aspire to attain the same goals of interaction with the spiritual through different channels. They share the same concerns of access and distribution of power, prosperity and protection against supernatural forces and their human agencies.³ But with the evangelicals the components of what Walls describes as 'African Maps of the Universe' (God, local divinities, and ancestors), have been radically altered. Divinities and ancestors are no longer regarded as intermediaries or representatives of God, but as evil spirits and demons working against God as agents of Satan. The evangelicals emphasise the power of Jesus Christ as the most effective power to protect and deliver.⁴ By his supreme sacrifice Christ is understood to have taken over the functions of the ancestors and the spirits; there is now no further need for other mediators because by his life, death and resurrection, Christ is understood to have bridged the gulf between God and man.⁵

There are tensions arising out of the opposition the evangelical movement poses to certain traditional values. While the evangelicals still practice the rites of passage, they do so with modifications that create an opposition to the traditional rituals associated with the rites, particularly with the role of the ancestors; for instance, the various evangelical groups in the country forbid members from becoming members of any secret societies. Point seven of CIA standards of church membership reads: 'In order to maintain spiritual excellence and faithful participation in the church, members must not be a member of any secret society or mason. (2 Cor.6:14)'. The result is that some youths who form part of the movement are breaking with tradition by renouncing their vows. Some are refusing to go through puberty rites, which involve initiation into a secret society. When they agree to become initiated they do so secretly, and only to please their elders. Pregnancy taboos are no longer adhered to, and members do not take part in death rites, which include the pouring of libations and talking to the dead. Any form of libation or sacrifice and conversation with the dead is forbidden.⁶

However, the prohibitions with regards to the dead do not indicate a lack of realisation of the importance of the ancestors. As members of the Sierra Leone community, evangelicals are fully aware of the role of the ancestors and the influence they exercise over people. The evangelicals recognise that this pattern must be broken if Christ is to exercise his lordship.⁷ In trying to break this pattern members are not to take part in the pouring of libations or any form of sacrificing to the ancestors. According to Abdul Pessima, a CIA pastor, there is a place for memorial services and the coming together of family members to remember their

ancestors. As in the traditional setting, this must be recognised as a useful way of bringing together family members who because of jobs, distance and other commitments do not see each other often. It should be a time of settling disputes, socialising and remembering the good deeds of the dead that could be emulated. Along with this, family graves are to be visited, but only for the sole purpose of cleaning up the environment. Nevertheless, evangelicals are urged to 'reject as unbiblical the tradition of talking to the dead and performing rituals to them at the graveside'.⁸ In evangelical circles it is emphasised that the dead are powerless to help. In fact they are also awaiting judgement day. Jesus Christ has taken over the functions of the ancestors. Abdul Pessima notes:

The dead has nothing to offer. Only the living Jesus has. Jesus has so much to offer. He is the living among the dead. If only you can set your eyes on Him, He will offer you salvation, peace, protection, provision, good health, and favour'.⁹

It is also emphasised by evangelical leaders that it is not the ancestors but evil spirits that are invoked whenever sacrifices are made to them.¹⁰ In the same vein, upon conversion some Christians would definitely need deliverance from ancestral covenants. Cyril Luke explained to me that ancestral covenants are entered upon through parental or other ancestral activities in relation to the spirit world. Sometimes they occur without the actual awareness of the individual, as in the case of a sacrifice being offered on behalf of the family or the individual as a part of the family. Some individuals enter covenants through visiting a diviner seeking help on issues such as barrenness, unemployment, and ill health. Whenever an incision is made by a diviner on an individual, or sacrifices are offered by, or on behalf of an individual, the individual is meddling with evil forces. Evangelicals are discouraged from naming children with names suggesting reincarnation e.g. *Iyatunde* (Creole mother has come back again). In the same vein the various spirits associated with various activities in the country, like the Mende *Tingoi* or Creole *Mami Wata* responsible for bringing wealth and good fortune to possessors, are all defined as demons operating as agents of Satan.¹¹ If these covenants and association with these forces are not broken, the individual, even though now a Christian, would be oppressed by them.

There are, however, significant points of congruence between the evangelicals and tradition. The emphasis by the evangelicals on sexual abstinence outside of marriage, and of marital fidelity is in harmony with the traditional society, which also stresses the same values. Divorce is frowned upon, and just like the elders would meet in the traditional way to

resolve the problem, so the church elders would meet to counsel the couple and see how the issue could be resolved without a divorce being effected.

The emphasis on spiritual forces behind events in the material world also finds a strong parallel in the traditional world view. In Sierra Leone, as studies in the rest of Africa indicate, there is always a spiritual explanation given for occurrences in the natural world. A considerable number of Sierra Leoneans always speak of evil spirits and witches who use their powers for destructive purposes. The important point, therefore, is to have some method of controlling these forces, or of protecting oneself from them. Horton notes that unlike the mainline churches, who are considered to have 'book theology' not adequately prepared to offer solutions to these problems, the evangelicals confront them directly.¹² The evangelicals meet the people on a level they readily understand from the traditional worldview, and deal with their fears of witchcraft, misfortune and illness as genuine theological concerns. However, unlike the traditional way, they locate the source of evil in the world among Satan and demonic forces. This is significant as Satan and demonic forces are new elements added by African Christianity.¹³ However, unlike the traditional way, evangelicals reject sacrifices, charms and the role of diviners as legitimate means to an end. Rather, they emphasise that there is a power greater than any other available to anyone who would become born again. This power, they stress, is in the name of Jesus Christ, the only power to overcome all other spiritual forces. Deliverance from demonic attacks and influences, therefore, forms a significant part of the evangelical ministries.¹⁴

Deliverance ministries are conducted by the individual groups, as well as jointly with other groups in crusades and outreach programmes. During such meetings people give testimonies about being delivered from demonic attacks. In one CLESL church service I attended on 25th December 1996, a lady, Isatu, gave a testimony about how she had been under attack by a demon.¹⁵ The demon was owned by her mother. He was responsible for making the mother wealthy. In 1975, the demon became jealous of Isatu's father. He caused him to kill a pregnant woman in a road accident. When Isatu's mother got to know the demon was responsible for her husband's misfortune, she wanted to break ties with him. The demon agreed only on condition that she was replaced by her only daughter. So without Isatu's knowledge or consent, the mother agreed to this pact. A sacrifice was offered involving a living sheep, rice flour and kola nuts. Isatu was covered with a white cloth during which time the transaction took place. Part of the agreement reached between the mother and the demon was that at a certain time each year she must offer the demon a sacrifice of a living

sheep. As long as the mother continued with the sacrifice, Isatu experienced an unusual amount of favour in all her endeavours. When the mother stopped this sacrifice, the demon in anger decided to make trouble for Isatu. When asleep at night Isatu would dream that she was having sexual intercourse with a white man.¹⁶ She started having problems in her relationship with her boyfriend, and at work. She says that she was experiencing all sort of bad-luck. Everything else in her life seemed to be closing in on her. In her despair she cried to God for help.

After crying to God for help, Isatu had a dream: a man in white appeared and told her to go to a specific street and look for a church office where she would receive help. She did as instructed, and upon arrival in the street, she was directed by passers-by to the CLESL office. At CLESL office she met and told Cyril Luke her story. He told her about Jesus and prayed with her to become a Christian. He then told her that she should continue going to the office for prayers for a whole week. During one such prayer meeting, it was revealed to Cyril Luke that she possessed a demon. He prayed for her deliverance, and she was delivered. The demon became very furious. He sought out the mother, telling her that for the past three days he had not been able to find Isatu. She says the days coincided with her accepting Christ and being covered with the blood of Jesus: 'My brothers and sisters, let us all realise that the blood of Jesus Christ is powerful. I was covered with the blood of Jesus, which the demon could not penetrate. Praise the Lord'. The mother called Isatu and confessed everything to her, including the precise sacrifice and time she had transferred the demon over to her. The mother asked for her forgiveness and begged her to continue with the demon, which Isatu refused. According to Isatu: 'There is no turning back from master Jesus, whose power had delivered me'. The mother was very distressed as the demon had promised to kill her if he did not find Isatu.¹⁷

Witchcraft is another phenomenon dealt with by the evangelicals in their deliverance meetings. The African distinctiveness is very much at play in the evangelical recognition and deliverance of victims, as well as witch culprits who want to stop their activities. The fear of witchcraft is very prevalent in the country. This fear reduces initiative and prevents changes beneficial to the society. People who are successful in life are afraid of being bewitched by those who may become jealous or envious of them. Those who are less fortunate blame their failures on the activities of witches.¹⁸ The evangelicals are trying to allay this fear and replace it with trust in the power of Jesus, as opposed to the various

protective charms used to ward off witchcraft attacks. On the second night of his crusade, Reinhard Bonnke addressed this issue with his message: 'Protection from evil spirits and witchcraft through faith in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ'. He told the crowd that if they accepted Jesus as Lord and saviour the activities of witches would have no effect on them, as they would be covered by the all-powerful blood of Jesus. Equally those who have associations with witchcraft and charms must abandon them, and replace them with complete trust in the power of Jesus if they wanted to be free from bondage.¹⁹

In January 1993, Cyril Luke also had a deliverance crusade at the YWCA New Hall. During this crusade people who were witches confessed and were delivered. During her deliverance one woman vomited blood she was supposed to have drunk from her victim the previous night. Sometimes during evangelical meetings and prayers they claim that witches are revealed to them. One such claim involved a girl, Jabu. She lived with her foster mother in Freetown. The foster mother, who is an evangelical, was having several problems at work and her health was beginning to suffer. She had asked various evangelicals to pray for her. On two separate occasions it was revealed to two different people praying for her that Jabu was a witch. When confronted she confessed that she had inherited it from her birth mother in the provinces. She related several incidents in which she had been involved in witch activities. She was invited and agreed to become a Christian and to cease her witchcraft activities. Her deliverance was parallel to the African pattern of identification, confession, cleansing, and restoration. Her deliverance involved a period of three days fasting and prayers presided over by Matty. At the close of this period the group met in Jabu's house for prayers and fellowship. She had to verbally renounce witchcraft. She was prayed for and baptised by immersion in the bath tub. The house was also prayed upon as an act of cleansing and dedication.²⁰

Witchcraft spirits are not the only evil forces in operation in Sierra Leone. The evangelicals emphasise that there are other evil forces using human agencies to destroy others. The attribution of ills to demonic forces in operation in the physical realm is welcomed by some individuals who view it as providing satisfactory explanations to occurrences in the country. Isatu, a trader at Congo Market, made this statement as her reason for attending 'Jesus is Lord': 'They tell you the truth in that church. If demons are not responsible for the ills in the country, how else can you explain it. This is not ordinary'.²¹ Evangelicals tell of dreams and visions which they have of a spiritual warfare raging through the country. For instance,

one informant, Mary, told me about a revival meeting she attended at Brookfields Stadium in March 1992. During the meeting one lady reported a vision she had had in which she was told that the former president Stevens had sold the country to the 'dancing demon of destruction'. This she reported was the reason for the destruction raging through the country in the form of the rebel war.²² I was also present at a Bible study meeting at Kortright in December 1992, when Sister Aisha, the lady leading the meeting, told of a vision she had. In the vision she saw, among other things, the Cotton Tree at the centre of Freetown covered with blood. This was interpreted to mean dire warnings of instability for the country. Those present at the meeting were urged to fast and pray for Sierra Leone. Evangelical visions emphasise the power of Jesus as the only power that would redeem the country.²³

The attribution of the ills in the country to demonic forces influencing politicians and other individuals like the rebels in the society is comprehensible from the traditional standpoint where any negation of community norms and values has consequences not only for the culprit, but for the well-being of the community as a whole. The evangelicals believe that Sierra Leone as a nation has degenerated into a state of ungodliness. It is the ungodly practices that triggered off the rebel war. As stated in the *Catalyst*, such ungodly practices in a nation are a direct abandoning of God's divine principles which should govern human society. When humanity fails to acknowledge God through ordering its life and systems in accordance with God's universal principles of right living, the consequence is judgement. The judgement itself is contained in the ungodly and evil practices, as an aftermath.²⁴

The distinguishable feature in the evangelical solution to the above problem lies with Jesus Christ, who is the only power to cleanse and heal individuals within the nation. To effect this solution a commitment to him first by Christians, and then by the rest of the populace is necessary. As Cyril Luke states: 'Sierra Leone must be a land of light, and the power of the gospel must reign. Christians should not relax, they have a responsibility to help bring this about. The country needs to be cleansed'.²⁵ Furthermore, it is reiterated in the *Catalyst* that a just and stable system will emerge in Sierra Leone only if members of the church will live more as servants of Christ. The church must in unity pray fervently for revival, repentance and mercy. Failure to do this will unleash the fury of Satan. The destiny of the nation lies squarely on the shoulder of the church leaders. As light and salt of the earth, the church is to guide this nation to righteousness not only by prayer and words, but also by example.²⁶

The healing ministries of the evangelicals also add a dimension to Christianity that finds its parallel in traditional society. The African understanding of illness, as well as the nature and purpose of healing, is at work. Most illnesses are thought to have other causes outside of the natural. As Walls notes: 'The question is not, what illness is it? but what or who caused it?'.²⁷ Even when the physical symptoms can be identified, the individual is considered to be a victim suffering from the operation of demons and their human agents. The person is regarded as being 'under attack'. The evangelicals attribute this to what they term as the fact that God is not the author of ill health, Satan is. Healing is therefore seen as an act of victory for Christ over Satan. The sick individual is made well as an act of victory against the forces trying to militate not only against the individual but the community. Any victory won for Christ is regarded as a victory for the evangelical community.²⁸

The introduction of the element of mystery also finds its parallel in the traditional: people are healed just by prayers being offered. The absence of this element of mystery is one reason why some people have no confidence in Western medicine. They see no rituals performed or any prayers offered by the doctors, and conclude that they are relying on their own efforts alone. Since the unaided effort of man is useless, they are not sure about modern medicine. To address this issue some evangelical doctors and nurses now offer prayers at the bedside of patients before commencing treatment.²⁹ At crusades and church meetings people testify to being healed, thereby attracting even more people to these groups. For instance, during Bonnke's crusade, one remarkable healing that took place was of a lady with a hunch back, who had been in that condition for ten years. During JLM's, seventh annual thanksgiving service a testimony was read of a barren lady who had been married for five years, but was not menstruating. She was prayed for and she started menstruating that same day: a month later, she became pregnant. At another meeting a lady who was very ill with a cyst in her stomach, but had no money for an operation, had hands laid on her, and she was prayed for. At night she was woken up by a very acute stomach pain. When she went to the toilet the cyst came out in very big lumps. She was taken to the hospital where a doctor confirmed that she no longer needed an operation as the cyst had come out miraculously. All he did was dilatation and curettage for cleaning up purposes.³⁰

Another boost for the evangelicals and their healing ministry is the fact that hospital treatment is very expensive. The alternative of going to diviners and the spiritualist churches, also involves finance. People have to pay the diviner's fee, and meet the cost for

any prescribed sacrifice by both diviners and prophets. Healing by prayers only is seen as a suitable alternative, not only for physical ailments like barrenness, but psychological ones like demon oppression, and ill-luck. Healing of cases regarded as not hospital cases are now directed to the evangelicals for prayers.³¹ However, the presentation by evangelicals that 'many miracles and healing took place', when reporting on their healing activities during crusades and prayer meetings, could sometimes be misleading. While they emphasise that many people are healed, no mention is made of the psychosomatic nature of some of the illnesses. Nor is mention made of the many more who are not healed, or of the casualties. This has led to some instances when people have forgone vital hospital treatment with fatal consequences.³²

Like the traditional setting, the evangelicals are creating their own distinct rituals and patterns of worship. There is the awareness of the holiness of the setting, so for some groups like JLM, it is compulsory for women to cover their heads before entering the church. Members of the congregation are to be clean and decently clad. The service itself fills a need of the African for communal and audience participation in religious ceremonies. The leadership team, imbued with the charismatic authority and power, interpret the scriptures, and lead the service. The assembled party of believers takes part in the service by singing, clapping and dancing, offering prayers, and giving testimonies. Posture is very important; eyes are to be closed during prayers and some people choose to kneel down. Depending on the song, hands are to be raised in praise to God. Songs depicting victory are sung with enough vigour so that Satan knows he is defeated. One popular CLESL song talks about God having fierce chariots and winning great victories. The song goes:

Your chariots are fierce oh God
Fire is around thy throne
Great is the noise
That follows after thee
Great is the victory won.³³

The singing, or song service as it is normally called, defines the preparatory stage in the service. During this time it is not unusual to see people becoming so emotionally charged as to kneel down, or even lie prostrate 'before God'.³⁴ This is usually followed by the acceptable practice of speaking in tongues, and the various interpretations. Sometimes there are testimonies given. Even though things do get emotional it must be pointed out that it does not get out of control. Once there is a call to prayer there is silence. The prayer focuses on the Godhead. After the prayers, the preacher who is recognised as a messenger bringing

the word of God, preaches. The preaching brings the congregation close to God by focusing on the Bible, and the authority and power given through Christ. This is followed by the closing song and prayers, during which the congregation is admonished to go out into the world and be doers of what they have heard.

It is significant that prayer is the focal point of their practice. This replaces divination in the traditional religion. Every major decision is reached as the result of prayers, which are sometimes accompanied by a vision. For instance, Cyril Luke started his ministry through divine revelation, as he says: 'You cannot work for a boss without following his specific instructions'. He says that everything he does, down to the messages he preaches, are all by specific instructions from God, which he receives through prayer and meditation on the Bible. Mami Dumbuya also started her ministry through divine instructions; even the name of the ministry was revealed specifically after prayer and fasting.³⁵ A typical public evangelical prayer involves the inviting of the presence of the Supreme Being, and the binding of all contrary spirits. During this time the attributes of God are referred to. The person praying is only an instrument and must be regarded as that by the participants, who must focus on God. As a demonstration I would paraphrase and translate into English Mami Dumbuya's prayer during JLM's seventh annual thanksgiving service. Just before she preached the sermon she prayed:

Praise God, Praise Jesus.
Father God in the name of Jesus of Nazareth,
We give you thanks, we give you glory, praise and adoration
Lord as I stand in your presence, I am no one.
Lord I pray that I would decrease and decrease forever and ever
And that you would increase forever and ever.
Lord I pray that your Holy Spirit take over right now
Touch my lips like Jeremiah
Put your word which is a consuming fire
Put your word which is a crushing hammer
Put your word which is quick and sharper than any two edged sword
Right now in my mouth today
Whatever I say may it be for your own glory
I take authority right now
I bind all unclean spirits
Any spirit that wants to exalt himself above the spirit of you the living God
Send your fire from heaven to consume.
In the name of Jesus of Nazareth
Thank you dear God, thank you Jesus, thank you Holy Spirit.
Amen.³⁶

The congregation, who have been in agreement as she prays, answer Amen.

A point of interest is that the leaders of the various evangelical groups are recognised as having charismatic power and authority, replacing in some instances that of the diviners and traditional elders. They fill the vacuum created by a changing society, as people listen to them and give them the respect they cannot accord to the politicians. In *Globe* newspaper an article captioned 'Operation Restore Confidence' notes that 'Sierra Leoneans see their politicians as not only politically and financially corrupt, but morally and spiritually corrupt as well, they therefore, look to religious leaders for help'.³⁷ Evangelical leaders are held in such high esteem that it becomes almost sacrilegious to refer to them by name. Cyril Luke is referred to as 'Pastor', not only by members of his congregation, some even older than him, but even by his wife. Mrs Dumbuya is referred to as 'Mami'.³⁸ The leaders are so highly esteemed that their opinion is sought on every occasion, by a vast majority of their followers. There is always a large crowd waiting to gain audience with them, which is by appointment. Leaders like Cyril Luke and Dora Dumbuya are aware of the dangers of people seeing them as 'gods' rather than instruments, so they are always at pains to point out to people that they are also humans. They tell people to focus on the Bible and on Christ and to test everything they say with the Bible.³⁹ How much people actually understand and perceive them as only instruments is not very clear. Even Muslims with problems visit them to pray for them instead of praying for themselves. A trader selling bread once said to me: 'I am a Muslim but I have problems. That is why I am going to Mami Dumbuya to pray for me, so that Papa God will solve my problems',⁴⁰

As in the case of tradition, dreams and visions are also recognised by the evangelicals as mediums of communication from the spirit realm to the realm of human. The difference is that their dreams and visions all come from God, either to warn, to challenge, or to encourage. God has promised that in the last days he would pour out his spirit on all people, with them prophesying, having visions, and dreams.⁴¹ However, caution is exercised as the evangelicals say Satan could come as an angel of light. Dreams and visions are to be tested and subjected to God's word to prove its authenticity. A demonstration of what is distinctively African in terms of the seriousness of dreams and the messages they convey can be seen in the following story of Musa Foray Marah: Musa graduated from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in 1990, with the degree of B.Sc. General in Economics. After graduation, between October 1990 - September 1991, Musa pursued a one year Islamic Study programme at the International Institute of Islamic Studies in Freetown. On

completion he went for practical training in Saudi Arabia for six months. He then spent some time visiting Muslim institutions in Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Gambia, and Guinea Bissau. On his return home he was installed as Sheikh and given the name Musa in 1993. He taught in a mosque at Fourah Bay, in the East End of Freetown, where he was highly respected as a Muslim scholar and teacher.

In August 1994, he was arrested by the military police because of feared links with the deposed deputy leader of the NPRC, SAJ Musa.⁴² He was detained at the military headquarters at Cockeril, in Freetown. On the 7th October 1994, he was asleep in his cell, when he had a dream. He saw a light and heard a voice telling him to get up and have Christian fellowship.⁴³ He woke up with a start. He fell asleep again, and for the second time he dreamt he saw a light, and a voice telling him to read Mark 16:15. He was warned that if he disobeyed the instruction he would die and go to hell fire. He was also shown certain things that were to take place even before his release; all came to pass. He decided that upon his release he would seek to find out more. He was released on the 5th December 1994. On the 7th December, he was walking along Pademba Road when he saw the sign 'Scripture Union Office'. He went in to ask questions. He was led to Christ after he had told them his story.

This decision led to his ostracisation by his family and the Muslim community. His wife was taken from him. It was an arranged marriage according to Islamic rites. His property was all confiscated, and his life was even threatened. He was considered by his Muslim elders to have committed an unpardonable sin, by becoming an 'infidel'. Despite all this there is no way he is going back to Islam because, as he says, 'I received a specific revelation from God in that dream, and I must obey Him'. He sees his role as reaching out to Muslims, and freeing them from what he sees to be the dark world of Islam. He is very committed to the task he sees as his own. He has been to Nigeria to study missions at a Bible College. He is a member of CIA, who recognise him as a valuable tool in reaching out to Muslims as he is from the same background.⁴⁴

2. Other factors

It is not only in its relation to tradition that the evangelical movement seem to be fulfilling the prevailing need for *kabudu* in the country. It seems to be achieving this also through its

fulfilment of other social, economic and political needs, not only for participants, but also for the wider public. These will be examined in the rest of the chapter.

2.A The role of children and youths.

The evangelical movement, like the traditional community, is concerned not only with the spiritual, but the whole life of the individual. Children and youths, like the traditional community, are considered to be very important in the evangelical movement. Children and youths are recognised by the movement as valuable agents of change. Like tradition, children are to be socialised and the values and norms of the movement instilled in them at an early age. In a discussion with Cyril Luke on 20 December 1996, he notes that the children and youths are the future leaders of tomorrow, and it is very important to help in moulding their moral and mental dispositions for their future roles. He sees the aim of the evangelicals, as far as the children and youths are concerned, as encouraging them and helping to give rise to, and maintaining a new breed of this sector who would have a positive vision for their personal lives and for others. This in turn would be reflected in their output to their community and the country on the whole. It is hoped that if this new breed permeates every sphere of the economic, religious, political and social aspects of the country, their impact would be immense. For no matter how secular or religious their activities and roles, they would try to be God-fearing and God-pleasers.⁴⁵

The Children

In recognition of the above factor children are not excluded from the evangelical movement.⁴⁶ Sunday School is held on a regular basis by the various groups. Every year various programmes are organised for the children during the long vacation, like the Vacation Bible School (VBS), organised each year by CIA. During this programme held in August, children learn about the Bible and what it means to be, and live as a Christian through various activities like songs, Bible study, drama, arts and crafts, cookery, and health education. At the end of the programme a special service is held, when the children are the main participants; singing, dramatising, and reciting memory verses. During the service the children are also awarded prizes by the organisers, for performance and attendance during the Sunday School and VBS. The prizes act as an incentive for them to learn punctuality and be disciplined enough to study. Like any other African community, the children begin to

develop a sense of belonging to a community by participating in the church activities.⁴⁷ Children love the programmes and attend in large numbers. Some parents attend because they have either been invited by their children, or they see the positive changes in them at work and play. In this way, the ministry of children becomes a ministry to adults also.

The evangelicals make the effort in taking up the challenge posed by the United Nations charter on the rights of the child. Sierra Leone became the second country in Africa and the seventh in the world to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), on June 18, 1990. The convention is summarised under three headings:

1. The Right to Survival: through the provision of adequate food, shelter, clean water, and primary health care.
2. The Right of Protection: from abuse, neglect and exploitation, including the right to special protection in terms of war.
3. The Right to Develop: in a safe environment, through the provision of formal education, constructive play, advanced health-care and the opportunity to participate in the social, economic, religious and political life of the culture, free from discrimination.⁴⁸

Since this ratification the government has taken a keen interest in children's affairs, but unfortunately this has been in theory rather than in practical terms. The situation is worsening because of the civil unrest in the country. The onus has lain with the religious groups, the non-governmental organisations, and the intergovernmental agencies. The evangelicals are making very significant strides in helping children.

As part of their children's ministry, CIA established a school in September 1989 at the Kissy branch. The school is named The Eva Houston Preparatory School, after the lady who was very instrumental in raising the fund in America for its formative stages. This is an indication of the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone being part of a world-wide movement. This school is officially registered with the government. It started as a preparatory school, providing quality pre-primary education, like any private school, but at a subsidised rate. This was of great benefit to parents who because of financial constraints might never have afforded this foundation for their children. The school has taken the challenge of the UN convention by upgrading to the primary level. Each year one class was added at the primary level, until in 1997, the school achieved the top-most grade at the primary level. In 1997, the first set of pupils from the school took the national school exams, before going on to secondary schools.⁴⁹ According to Patricia Attawai and some other CIA

informants, the school has been a motivating factor in staff members seeking to further their education. Some have gone on to college to gain further qualifications in teacher training, and some have even obtained degrees at university level. This has helped in creating upward social mobility.⁵⁰

One of the most significant impacts of the evangelicals on children and youth has been achieved through the efforts of the women's ministries of EFSL. The ministry known as Pan African Christian Women Alliance - PACWA, started in November 1991. Sierra Leone endorsed the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1990.⁵¹ The implementation of various agreements entered into by the government is mostly left to the non-governmental organisations. According to the PACWA coordinator Elizabeth Mensah, the PACWA ministry has taken up the challenge of the UN convention. PACWA recognises the fact that in theory the government has endorsed the convention stated above, but in practice it is quite a different story. PACWA notes that women comprise 55% of the Sierra Leone population, and over 80% of them belong to the marginalised cadre of society.⁵² The coordinator pointed out to me that the situation is not unique to Sierra Leone. A report published by Tear Fund states that women make up half the world's population, yet they receive one-tenth of the world's income, provide two-thirds of the world's working hours, own only one-hundredth of the world's property.⁵³ The main aim of PACWA, therefore, is to help in restoring the dignity of women, as well as address women's issues from a Christian perspective, including issues such as polygamy, prostitution, wife battering, economic deprivation, illiteracy, unjust legislation and female circumcision.⁵⁴ PACWA has established links with international organisations also committed to ending discrimination and restoring the dignity of women. In the course of their work they deal not just with women, but the whole society. They conduct seminars and workshops in schools, churches and church groups, sensitising children, youths and adults to issues involving everyone, with particular reference to the female perspective.

There have been many violations of the rights of children in the country. One eye-sore has been the number of child beggars in the capital. This has increased dramatically in Freetown and the other main towns since the escalation of the civil unrest in the country. Many displaced and orphaned children and youths roam the streets begging. The evangelicals recognise this as an anti-social phenomenon that is a major threat to the social, economic, political, and religious life of the country. When it involves children, who are the future

leaders of the country, then it becomes a menace.⁵⁵ With this in mind PACWA conducted a survey in 1995 among child beggars between the ages of six and fourteen. The survey aimed at investigating the reasons and effects of child begging on the individual and the nation. With the result of the survey it is hoped that something will be done to alleviate the situation.⁵⁶

The participants were drawn from Freetown. It was discovered that 70% of child beggars are boys and 30% girls; 87% of the sample are from the Eastern province and the remaining 13%, from the other regions including Freetown. The beggars include the displaced, orphans, school dropouts, and those who have never been to school. One hundred percent of the respondents replied that abject poverty is the cause for them begging. The related factors included the need for basic meals, toys, and decent clothing, idleness, boredom, and acceptance. Some of them it must be noted are actually coerced into begging by their parents, who are of the opinion that people will be more sympathetic to a child beggar than an adult.

The effect as the evangelicals see it is that a generation of young people with low or no moral standards, the 'misfits of tomorrow', are being bred. These children are denied the rights to schooling, good housing, and health facilities. They are deprived and suffer from wide scale abuse, which in turn creates a loss of self esteem. This results in a life of crime as drug addicts, prostitutes, and thieves. PACWA compiled a report on the survey which has been distributed among would be donor agencies, both internal and external. PACWA is seeking to establish partnership with those willing to fund a project to help alleviate poverty among children. They aim to get as many children as possible off the streets into schools and rehabilitation programmes.⁵⁷

The Youths

Like the children, the youths are also considered to be very important by the evangelicals. PACWA has a number of programmes organised to help youths (particularly females) come to terms with their sexuality, and to help them develop their self worth as individuals. PACWA has a Teenage Pregnancy Support Programme, through which many adults, parents and teenagers have been sensitised on the effects of teenage pregnancy. This programme started out of the need expressed by women during various PACWA workshops and

seminars.⁵⁸ Pregnancy among girls between the ages of twelve to seventeen years is a very serious problem in the country. The factors responsible for this include poverty, ignorance about the effect of unprotected sex, peer pressure, and the need to be adventurous. Poverty is by far the biggest and most vicious circle of all. Some girls indulge in sex out of the need to earn money either for themselves or because of family pressures.⁵⁹ The evangelicals attack the traditional practice of early marriage, which they see as no longer viable in the country: They note that poor families literally sell their girls into early marriages, because of the financial benefits to be accrued. These girls end up being exploited to such a degree that they end up with psychological, emotional and physical traumas, particularly when the marriage leads to a premature pregnancy with the girl herself becoming a child mother. To escape from this system of marriage some girls run away from home, only to end up being trapped in a system of exploitation, with them becoming pregnant and poverty stricken.⁶⁰ The evangelicals are not alone in their concerns about early marriage, and teenage pregnancy. There are various women's groups also expressing concern. For instance, there is the 'Forum For African Women Educationalists Sierra Leone Chapter'. The founder and chairperson of this group, had herself worked in the field of education for twenty years. Most of this time she spent as a teacher in the rural areas where the early marriage of girls was an acceptable norm. She notes this about the particular girls' school where she taught:

The school had an average annual intake of two hundred girls aged 10-12 years old into the first year of secondary education. By the end of five years only 20% of them would still be in school to take school leaving exams. For the other 80%, education had been terminated, and the role of mother and breadwinner thrust upon them, making them victims of a combination of poverty and misplaced values.⁶¹

For most campaigners against early marriage and teenage pregnancy, the two factors are considered to perpetuate a cycle of poverty, and degradation for the girls.

Teenage pregnancy, therefore, becomes a vicious circle: Some pregnant girls would have an abortion. As a result of poverty the abortions are performed through the cheapest means offered by unqualified medical practitioners. This sometimes leads to death or other severe complications that would affect the girls for life. For others, particularly the school-going girls, pregnancy signals the end of their schooling and their careers. The PACWA coordinator observed that sometimes the unmarried girls are ostracised by their family, and by their church, which leads further to the end of their spirituality. PACWA has devised a programme that has three aspects: prevention, restoration, and rehabilitation. To achieve the first aspect of prevention PACWA organises seminars and talks frequently in secondary

schools. Their target groups are the girls between the ages of twelve to sixteen, considered to be the most vulnerable. Some of them might possibly not be involved in sex as yet. Through the use of audio-visuals like video recordings, topics such as the hazards of early sex, teenage pregnancy, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases are discussed. The programmes always have a proposed solution which is abstinence through the power of God. Posters distributed in schools also carry the warning that prevention is better than cure. For example, one poster reads: *Wan Tem Kratch Sef Kin Gi Yu Belleh* - 'Just one sexual encounter is enough to make you pregnant'. Programmes are also organised to educate parents and adults about the dangers of early marriages, and to encourage them to remove sex from its taboo status, and discuss it openly with their children.⁶²

While the preventative aspect is considered by PACWA to be very important, they recognise the fact that for some children this is too late, but there is still hope. According to the coordinator, most girls are denied a second chance which is quite wrong. She says that God forgives the repentant sinner and gives a second chance.⁶³ So PACWA balances sin condemnation with opportunity for restoration. The girls are encouraged to make their peace with God by asking his forgiveness for the sins they have committed. They provide counselling services, as required, for the girl and the partner involved, as well as for the parents and the girl involved. The coordinator stressed that the latter is very important as sometimes the experience is so traumatic that the parents who might have had high hopes for their girl's future, drive them away. PACWA helps in restoring not only the girl's relationship with God, but also with the family. PACWA has among its members midwives and nurses, who help in providing useful instruction on pre and post natal care, particularly for girls too poor or ashamed to go to the hospital or clinic.⁶⁴ At the end of pregnancy, if the need arises, they help to pay the medical bill, and provide baby items for the new-born.

After the restoration stage is the rehabilitation aspect. PACWA helps the teenage mother to get back into society. Even though they might have missed out on getting back into formal schooling, PACWA has successfully rehabilitated several girls, by funding them to get into vocational institutions to forge a career for themselves. The coordinator emphasised that this is by no means an indication that they condone or take a lax approach to sex, but following the pattern set by Jesus, their role is to incorporate rather than isolate and ostracise sinners.

PACWA also works with unaccompanied children, returning from the refugee camps outside of the country. These children are either orphans, or have been separated from their families when they escaped the ravages of war. They are between the ages of twelve to seventeen, and considered to be vulnerable to sexual and other abuses. They are housed at a camp for displaced people in Waterloo, on the outskirts of Freetown. PACWA organises fellowship meetings with these children, during which they not only discuss the Bible, but they discuss issues pertaining to their self esteem. PACWA has helped in placing children in schools, and is establishing contacts to see whether their family members can be traced. To alleviate the need for activities such as prostitution and petty stealing, PACWA provides them with food, clothing and other items. These provisions are obtained from individual donations and the EFSL, which is heavily involved in relief activities.⁶⁵

3. *Female circumcision*

Another issue of social concern, not just for the evangelicals but for the whole of the country, is the issue of female circumcision. This issue lends credence to the fact that aspects of tradition are subjected to modifications and expansions in a changing society. There are a lot of debates going on for and against the continuation of this practice. The debate, which started in the early part of this decade, intensified in 1995/6. On the one side of the divide are those opposed to the practice of female circumcision. They include medical practitioners, initiates who have been traumatised by their experiences, and men who complain of sexual dissatisfaction with circumcised women.⁶⁶ The views they represent are not necessarily evangelical. On the other divide are the traditional women who are against any form of interference with their secret society.

Some argue for the eradication of circumcision and not the *bondo* society as a whole. This they say is necessary as female circumcision is no longer viable in modern Sierra Leone. Promiscuity is on the increase, with circumcised women seeking sexual satisfaction from more than one partner. As an act of defiance, teenage sex is also on the increase. Once the girl is sexually active some parents would rather not have them initiated than endure the shame and dishonour that losing their virginity brings to the family. In cases like these the family make excuses for the girl and send her away from their locality. The climax of the discussion against continuing came in August 1996, with the Radio-phone-in programme on FM96.2. People phoned in with their own experiences and gave reasons why it should be

abolished. The traditional *sowes* and women reacted by staging a convention at the Miatta Conference Hall in August. After the conference they presented a ten-point resolution to the government at State House. Among other things they demanded a ban on all open and public discussions about female circumcision.⁶⁷

As a result of all the bitter debates and conflict the Sierra Leone government resolved that:

1. *Bondo* sessions must not be held on Fridays and Sundays, or during the months of Ramadan and Lent.

2. Only girls aged ten years and over were to be circumcised.

3. Girls are to be circumcised only with their expressed consent.⁶⁸

In theory the government resolution was accepted but in practice there has been a number of forced circumcisions, particularly of young girls between the ages of 5-8. Two notable cases have been the forceful circumcision of a 28 year old lady in mid-August 1996, and the circumcision of over one hundred displaced girls by a *sowe* in the East end of Freetown in January 1997.⁶⁹

A view subscribed to by the evangelicals on the issue of female circumcision is the one defined by medical sources as the amputation of a healthy organ of the female genitalia.⁷⁰ The evangelicals see this as a harmful traditional practice against women. Children and youths are initiated before they reach adulthood, so it is seen as a violation of the health rights of the girl child. After many years of research, the World Health Organisation (WHO), has concluded that the practice has serious health risks, and is a violation of basic human rights. The evangelicals welcome this finding. They aim through PACWA to drastically reduce its occurrence in the evangelical groups and the church in Sierra Leone, if not completely eradicating it from the country.⁷¹ In this attempt PACWA has been working in partnership with the Inter African Committee On Harmful Traditional Practices For Women In Africa - IAC. The IAC has provided the funds for the employment of one medical officer to assist PACWA in conducting seminars and workshops. They have also provided some audio visual aids. One that has very horrific scenes is the video entitled 'Beliefs and Misbeliefs'.⁷²

The target group is the children and youth between the ages of ten to sixteen years.

According to the coordinator, PACWA's approach is not the wholesale condemnation of culture, but just the modification of one aspect considered to be hazardous. To buttress the

point that culture itself is not completely bad, the good things in the culture are always highlighted in any discussion. The workshops and seminars always include medical personnel to discuss the health hazards. They also include those who have been through the operation, and who are now convinced it is not necessary. They relate their own experiences of very difficult labour, heavy bleeding, pain and sexual unfulfilment.⁷³ Using the Bible, they also show that evil spirits could be invited through the rituals related to the practice. It is interesting to note that the approach of dialogue rather than the wholesale condemnation of culture is a new development. This is part of the change the evangelical movement is undergoing as it adapts itself to the society. In the early eighties the evangelicals with righteous zeal were condemning almost every aspect of culture as demonic. This led to their ostracisation in many circles. This obviously was a hindrance to the propagation of their gospel. Youths were driven from their homes by aggrieved parents. One evangelical minister was even driven from his home town when he condemned their secret society. He was given 24 hours to leave or face being murdered.⁷⁴ The evangelicals are now displaying more sense and maturity in handling such sensitive issues. Now emphasis is on dialogue rather than confrontation.

As the culture of silence, which has prevailed, slowly recedes, initiates are becoming more open in discussing the issues involved. From discussions it is becoming clear that most people practice female circumcision because of ignorance of the effects. There is also the fear of what the ancestors would do, as well as the fear of being ostracised by their family and community. With education and open discussions attitudes are beginning to change, fears are significantly allayed, and other practical ways of belonging to the community are being discussed. PACWA does not leave out the *sowes*, particularly those who are now Christians, from their discussions. If the *sowes* agree to stop the practice, it means a loss of livelihood, and status for them. They are given money to set up business, some are encouraged to train as midwives, and local court mediators. PACWA is also engaged in dialogue with a means of finding a suitable alternative to the operation. One possibility they are exploring is to organise camps for teenage girls, presided over by Christian *sowes*. The camps would prepare them for adulthood, but exclude the circumcision ritual and sacrifices to the ancestors.⁷⁵

4. AIDS

Another social and health hazard that is been addressed by the evangelicals is the AIDS pandemic. AIDS is a modern problem that was not present in the traditional society. Tradition is not equipped to handle it and the government is incompetent in dealing with it. A random survey conducted by the National AIDS Control Programme, completed in July 1994, involved blood tests on thousands of individuals. The result showed that only 2.7% of those tested had the virus.⁷⁶ However it is probable that many people are carrying and spreading the virus unknowingly. This means that the potential impact has not been understood by most of the population. The evangelicals through the work of SU see the need to educate and sensitise the nation, particularly the youths, concerning this deadly virus.

The SU program, known as 'The Aids For AIDS and Design For The Family', is a full time project that has for its director a female graduate from the University of Sierra Leone, Mrs Ruby Pearce. The programme does not intend to provide curative or counselling services to AIDS victims. SU holds strongly to the belief that; 'AIDS is a symptom of the breakdown of traditional family life, and the loss of Christian moral values'.⁷⁷ Evangelicals argue that a return to the standards of moral behaviour instituted by God is the most paramount weapon to fight AIDS. It is seen by them as a practical, wholesome, and essentially positive lifestyle. The first aim of the project is 'to reach young people through our established network in schools and churches'.⁷⁸ The target group is children and youth between the ages of eleven and twenty years, considered to be most vulnerable to AIDS. The idea is to alert and get the school and church authorities involved in sensitising the children and youths in their care. SU trains volunteers from their established networks, and equips them with the necessary materials to carry out the work in their respective schools and churches. Seminars and workshops are conducted in the various schools, beginning at the primary level six and on to the secondary sixth form level. The idea is to stimulate the thoughts of the young people; it highlights the necessity for behavioural change. The children are involved in the practical discussions that SU hopes will lead them to adopt the positive lifestyle offered by God.⁷⁹

In line with the schools, SU runs a programme for adults aimed at engaged or married couples, teaching them Christian values on enjoying a rich and fulfilling marriage. The programme also has an aspect known as positive parenting. This provides helpful materials

for parents by encouraging them to give time and effort to their responsibility as parents or as potential parents.⁸⁰

5. *Marriage*

Marriage is another social institution that has been affected by the evangelical movement. The evangelicals address the same issues that are in consonance with tradition. Like the traditional community, there is need to maintain the purity and exemplary nature of the evangelical movement through the careful regulation of sexual conduct. Sex outside of marriage is strictly prohibited. For those married emphasis is on marital fidelity, mutual respect, and sharing of family responsibility. The director of CLC, himself an evangelical states:

Sex is timely, healthy and from God. But it is meant for God's institution marriage. Sex outside God's prescriptions of marriage is plainly sin, and will lead to eternal punishment if not abandoned.⁸¹

Homosexuality is also condemned by the evangelicals.⁸²

To avoid pre-marital sex, long courtship is discouraged by the movement. Each group has a women's meeting or ladies group, and during meetings young women are encouraged to resist what is regarded as a violation of their womanhood. They are admonished to love themselves enough to resist the temptation of pre- and extra-marital sex. Biblical passages like, 1 Cor 6:9 and 2 Cor 6:16 on the body being the temple of the living God, are often quoted.

So concerned are the evangelicals with the maintenance of the harmony and well-being of its community through the purity of its members that sexual violations are taken very seriously. Violators are placed before a disciplinary committee. Sometimes they are suspended if they hold positions of responsibility. Continued violation could lead to expulsion. One typical practice is for the guilty person/s to stand in front of the congregation and confess their sin. This is very important as sin upsets the balance of the community. The violator is considered guilty of transgressing a communal regulation instituted by God. Confession is an important element, otherwise the sin is retained, rendering the individual unacceptable before God and the community. The confession is usually followed by forgiveness and an act of restoration through prayers by the elders. However, while this

serves as a deterrent to others, the feeling of guilt and shame could be so strong as to drive the guilty away from the particular group to another, but sometimes not.⁸³

Choice of partners is mostly by mutual consent. But there are times when matchmaking goes on in varying degrees; an individual might approach the elders with the request that they help him/her find a suitable partner. They are then coupled with suitable members. Sometimes also the elders or marriage team might intervene to end a relationship they deem is not suitable due to one reason or another. However, it must be noted that there always has to be consent by both parties. Counselling of a would-be couple takes place, to help equip and prepare them for marriage. Sometimes this has led to the cancellation of some weddings.⁸⁴

Emphasis is on the immediate family (that is the husband, wife and children) taking precedence over the extended family, as well as the mutual consent of both individuals, instead of marriage purely by arrangement. This situation has helped in reducing a significant amount of pressure from couples. There is also no need for 'live in' situations, as in cases where couples cohabited but were constrained from marrying because of the expense involved. Now the evangelicals come together to help pay for the expenses involved in weddings. As far as evangelical weddings are concerned the interplay of tradition and Western values is clearly evident. While counselling of the couple before their wedding is compulsory, Church weddings are not considered to be the only form of acceptable practice. CIA, for instance, have had several couples who have been married at home in the traditional way. When this happens the emphasis is to ensure that the elders on both sides of the family are satisfied with the wedding arrangements, with which the leadership team of the evangelical group also must be involved. Some of these couples had been living together in their pre-evangelical days, and already had children. CIA has helped in completing the payment of the bride price as prescribed by tradition. The marriage is then registered in the official government registry. The important thing observed, whether the wedding took place in the home or in a church, is what is known as 'church blessing'. This is usually held on the first Sunday after the wedding ceremony. During the service the couple kneel in front of the altar, they are prayed for by the leader, and officially recognised as husband and wife.

In the case of evangelical members of the Kono ethnic group, where widow and property inheritance is strictly enforced according to the patrilineal line of inheritance, the couple are

encouraged to get married at the government registry, because of the legal implications.⁸⁵ They also have to undergo the church blessing. The African distinctiveness is clearly seen in the use of items like kola nuts and a calabash during engagement ceremonies, and the beating of the traditional drums like the *goumbay* after the ceremony. There is always the communal feasting and dancing to mark the occasion. However aspects like pouring libation and sacrificing to the dead are rejected. As part of a world-wide movement, married couples are encouraged to wear wedding rings, as a symbol of their status and to ward off would be admirers. Polygamy is frowned upon. A view subscribed to by the ladies of an evangelical women's meeting for married women held in April 1995 is that this whole new dimension is restoring the dignity of women in an otherwise male dominated society. The abuse of women in their homes is very minimal, and women do not have to compete with other women (particularly the in-laws) for the affection of their husbands. They are companions and not slaves in the marital home.⁸⁶

It is also worth noting that the largest number of inter-ethnic marriages in the country take place between evangelicals. The socio-political implication of this is that a new society is being created that transcends ethnic barriers. In the future ethnic tensions are likely to be minimised, and in the next generation people will see themselves as Sierra Leoneans, instead of a member of a particular ethnic group.⁸⁷

Sexuality and the sexual act have been taboo subjects, particularly among the female population. During puberty initiation rituals, girls are taught that sex should be regarded as a sacred duty. This duty is for procreation and the fulfilment of their husbands, but certainly not for their own pleasure or satisfaction. Sex is now losing its taboo status among the evangelicals, as sex and sexuality are discussed in their womens' meetings. Seminars and workshops are held on these issues. The culture of silence is slowly receding. Women receive the encouragement and support from other women who can identify with them in building up a very rich and fulfilling marital union.⁸⁸ Sometimes the men are also invited to these meetings, and during couples fellowship meetings, both sexes have the opportunity of discussing the issues. The emphasis by the evangelicals is on sex as a sacred gift of God both for procreation, but also and equally important, for the pleasure and fulfilment of both partners within the marital union.⁸⁹

As a means of further enhancing and regulating the solidarity and well being of the community, evangelicals emphasise that individuals must be 'equally yoked' and stay in 'God's Will'. This implies that evangelicals are to be married only to evangelicals, and to those deemed to be God's will for them. This has placed significant pressure on some couples to get married, because they were told by their elders that it was God's will for the individuals to be yoked together. Some young people are also forced into marriage to prevent them from having sexual intercourse before marriage.⁹⁰ However the pressure of conforming to an established norm has had damaging consequences for some couples. Some have woken up after the euphoria to realise they have nothing in common with their spouse with the exception of having been born again. When this happens 'equal yoking' becomes 'unequal yoking', and 'God's will' becomes a violation of 'God's Will'. The effects on couples caught up in this web could be very devastating. While most of these marriages survive, because divorce is frowned upon, there is much tension in these homes. Some revert to adultery, or a miserable existence that is reflected in their disposition and manner of behaving. At the moment I have been informed by a pastor that the much abused term of 'God's Will' is now under scrutiny. Also through counselling and discussions issues of this nature are now being grappled with.⁹¹

One other aspect that finds its parallel in the traditional society are the evangelical 'bring and share' communal meals. These meals are held by the evangelicals on any important occasion like welcoming a new leader, farewells, weddings, birthdays, and child dedication. On such occasions the traditional virtues of caring and sharing are displayed; there is the gift element, members take along gifts as well as food stuff. Members of the community are gathered, new friendships are forged and the old renewed.

6. *The social gospel*

As the social context in the country changes, the evangelicals are meeting the needs met by tradition. They have developed what is known as 'the social gospel'. Through the practical application of the 'social gospel', they hope to address the political and social factors that cause poverty and deprivation, with all the resultant consequences for individuals and the society as a whole.⁹² Most of the individual groups have a welfare or helps ministry. The funds from this ministry are used in helping members with financial needs. Such funds are a useful way of putting faith into action, as the wealthy are encouraged to contribute towards

helping the less fortunate, with the hope of receiving more from God. The entire atmosphere is one of fellowship and mutual concern for one another's physical as well as spiritual well-being. The wealthy appreciate the fact that their wealth is from God and must be shared, the less fortunate have a sense of belonging to a caring and loving community.

The home group or home cell fellowship, instituted by most groups, is also very useful in fostering community solidarity. For instance CIA instituted a Home Cell Ministry in 1984. This is not unique to CIA. The idea was copied from the pattern established by Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, the leader of the Full Gospel Central Church, the fastest growing church in Seoul, South Korea. This pattern has been further copied by the more recent evangelical groups.⁹³ For the home cell, the church members are organised into small neighbourhood units, where members not only receive spiritual encouragement, but also the love and care of a community. This is significant as it gives individuals a new sense of belonging in the breakdown of the extended family.

The evangelical movement has a large percentage of youth in its membership. This is because the movement provides individuals with new opportunities for survival and self expression, offering strength and purpose in an otherwise purposeless existence. Social barriers are broken down as leadership roles within the various groups are distributed not in terms of wealth or age, but in terms of the spiritual maturity of the individuals. This is very attractive for the youths who like to be treated as responsible adults.⁹⁴ Attractive youth programmes are held by the individual groups and in co-operation with the other groups, activities such as camps, video shows, musical and drama concerts, athletic meetings and football matches. These activities provide fun and recreation in a healthy moral atmosphere, that evangelicals consider essential for the continuation of the movement. There is renewed hope and change of attitude among the youths. The restoration of morals to the youths is helpful in the transformation of the wider society, as the youths are the future leaders of tomorrow. As mentioned by Cyril Luke: 'When the leaders of the nation are disciplined with a high sense of morals this obviously is a great boost for the political system'. A point of interest is that the movement attracts not just the masses, but the young, educated and affluent in the society. They in turn motivate other members within the movement to become achievers, so there is upward social mobility. An example of this upward social mobility could be seen in the life of Yatta, one of the CIA pastors. He was a drug addict and a school dropout in 1979, when he became converted. After his conversion he was

encouraged to go back to school. He received financial support from some evangelicals which enabled him successfully to complete his schooling. He then went on to the Jui Bible College, where he graduated with distinction. He is now married and pastors one of the CIA branches. He testifies that: 'When I became a Christian the hopelessness in my life was transformed. I was given a new sense of self worth, and provided with the incentive to become an achiever'.⁹⁵

This pattern of a deeply altered life is not just limited to the educated or upwardly socially mobile. The effect is also felt by those at the grassroots. Musu Koroma, a trader at King Jimmy Market in Central Freetown, has this to say four years on after conversion:

I was an addicted smoker and a drinker. I was sexually promiscuous and a renowned gossip. I became obsessed with various forms of *sara* (sacrifices), and wearing of amulets, and the rubbing of *lasmamie* (a concoction believed to bring good luck). I did all these things because I was in darkness.

God has changed me. I have stopped smoking and drinking. I am no longer engaged in *sara*. I have come to realise that Christ is my greatest *sara*. Now I do not wear amulet or even rub *lasmamie*. I no longer gossip, but I am a peace maker. I am no longer sexually promiscuous. I left all vice not by my own power, but by the grace and power of the Lord. I thank God I have gained my salvation.⁹⁶

7.A Development and educational projects

One of the most significant features of the evangelicals in the country is their ability to provide alternative solutions to the lack of employment opportunities, health and educational facilities, and other amenities outside of the government sector. There are a number of development projects that have been established by the evangelicals. They have established a number of small scale cooperatives and income-generating loan schemes in the country like the 'CIA Development Project' established between 1989 and 1990. This project has helped in generating employment for people otherwise unemployed. The project was instituted with the help of representatives of the United States-based Christian Extension Services (CES) in Sierra Leone. With the funds provided, an income generating loan scheme has been established. Members take loans to begin small-scale businesses like hairdressing and soap making. Through funds provided by CES, CIA has also started a tailoring boutique. Two elders of CIA note that 'the significance of these projects is that it helps people to put their God given abilities into use, thereby becoming self sufficient, rather than being dependent all the time upon others, as some people wrongly interpret living by faith to mean'.⁹⁷

CIA has also established an adult literacy programme, where adults learn the basics of reading and writing without feeling embarrassed. This programme was started with the help of the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, which offered free training to some teachers belonging to the CIA family.⁹⁸ This has helped illiterate adults to feel at home and participate in activities like singing and reading the Bible. One lady I had an informal conversation with was even thankful that now she can help her children at the primary school level with their basic homework.⁹⁹ Two major development projects embarked upon by the evangelicals are worth mentioning. These are the SU agricultural project and the EFSL vocational and technical institution.

7.B . *The SU Agricultural Project*

The SU agricultural project, known as The SUFES Bread of Life Agricultural Project, was founded in 1987, as a response to the government's campaign for a green revolution.¹⁰⁰ The project was jointly started by Scripture Union and The Sierra Leone Fellowship of Evangelical Students (SLEFES).¹⁰¹ They acquired forty acres of land at Makomba Village, in the Magbafti Chiefdom about thirty miles from the capital Freetown. However, because of lack of funds, serious work only started in 1992, when financial help came in the form of the mercy ship MV Anastasis. This ship, a Christian floating hospital, visited Sierra Leone in 1992. The ship provided money and equipment for the project to take off. The project co-ordinator is an agricultural science graduate from the Njala University College of Sierra Leone. The project has three main components: agriculture, health and evangelism.

The objectives of the agricultural aspect of this project include:

1. The development of twenty acres of farmland for the production of arable and permanent crops for food and cash, as well as, for demonstration purposes in the training of local farmers, within the period of three years.
2. To develop two acres of nursery for vegetable and tree crops to be made available to local farmers in due seasons within two years.
3. To facilitate the formation of farmers co-operatives in the community, which would promote greater community participation.
4. To provide extension services for forty-five farmers within the period of three years to help them with innovative production techniques.
5. To establish a community seed bank, with the aim of making readily available certain common crop-seeds and other essential inputs.

6. To establish four one-acre pastures with ranches for small animals in three years.¹⁰²

The project has helped to facilitate increased food production, improved nutrition, provided employment and generated income, thus improving the general living standard of about one thousand people living in the area. The leaders of the project believe that this has been a very useful tool of evangelism, as people are realising that Christianity is not just concerned about their spirituality, but also seeks to improve their welfare. The project has also helped in reducing the camp expenditure of SU and SLEFES. This is of great help as 60% of the total budget for camps, conferences and retreats, which are vital activities of the groups, goes to feeding participants.

There is a primary health clinic attached to the site. It is hoped that in the future, when funding permits, the clinic would be developed into a major health centre. It is also hoped that a rehabilitation centre would be developed on the site for street kids, who would have the opportunity of learning some trade.¹⁰³

The evangelism effort is aimed at converting the farmers and those in the nearby community to Christ. The SUFES site is seen as a model of what Christianity as an all round development of the individual is about.

7.C. The EFSL Vocational Training Centre

The vocational training centre established by EFSL is known as The Rapid Engagement in the Acquisition of Practical Skills (REAPS). REAPS was inaugurated on 18th December 1994. Training commenced in January 1995. REAPS is a two year programme of vocational and technical training to train and equip unskilled youths and young adults in acquiring basic practical skills that will aid them in their quest for self reliance. The entry requirement into the programme is completion of third form level at a secondary school. There are four main course options: metal work, carpentry and joinery, tailoring and typing and secretarial duties. REAPS not only aims at helping the students to acquire skills, but also seeks to promote their spiritual development, so that they would live godly and moral lives after graduating. To this end, one compulsory requirement for every staff member is that, coupled with their qualifications, they must be born-again Christians. Each day is started with Bible readings and prayers in which all staff and students must participate.

The project is co-ordinated by Mr Foday Khabenje, a Sierra Leonean Chemistry graduate from Fourah Bay College, in the University of Sierra Leone. He has written several project proposals. One promising one is for a sponsored tool scheme from Germany. Under this scheme graduate trainees would be loaned tools to start their own private business. They would pay for these tools over a period of time, to ensure tools replacement for subsequent years. Trainees include those who dropped out of formal schooling for various reasons, such as lack of funding, repeated failures, and those who completed school but with few or no GCE passes. One trainee says that he got his GCE in the late 1980s, but had become rusty because he had never been employed, and was unable to further his studies due to lack of funding.¹⁰⁴ Plan International Sierra Leone has helped to support him and nine other students to go through the programme.

The success of REAPS could be seen in the impact it is creating in the society, because it is subsidised, many people can afford to attend. It inspires and motivates the students on an unprecedented level, even among known dropouts. During the first graduation ceremony, REAPS received the acknowledgement and commendation from the government. The first graduation ceremony was held on Sunday, December 15, 1996, at the REAPS Centre Tower Hill. Out of forty five students in the final year, three were referred and Forty-two were successful.¹⁰⁵ At the ceremony, the principal education officer for secondary schools, Mr Salieu Kamara, lauded the EFSL for what he referred to as an appropriate initiative which compliments the 6334 educational system.¹⁰⁶ Mr Kamara reiterated: 'Government cannot provide all the support needed to educate our children....We hold the EFSL in trust as one of the organisations with a clearly defined educational programme that is in agreement with our national educational objectives'.¹⁰⁷

The co-ordinator, in his address during the thanksgiving service, congratulated the students on their achievements. He admonished them that their certificates must be used to promote their well-being. REAPS helps students to achieve this with the long term strategy they have of lobbying for job vacancies. Four months before completion of the programme trainees were sent to various establishments for work experience. Some of the trainees were later absorbed by the establishment with the vacancies because of their comportment, and excellence in their chosen sphere. About 30% of the first set of trainees are already in full time jobs through this strategy.

While the evangelicals begin their charity at home, they extend it to others outside of their circle. Their social gospel forms a major evangelistic tool to win others over into their fold. TEAR fund is at the moment working with the EFSL, to build up its capabilities, particularly in relief work, and also in its community development efforts. EFSL has over 4,500 displaced persons, mostly women and children on their register. Christians are encouraged to intensify the exercise of the ministry of love, care and sharing with the tens of thousands displaced, meeting their physical and spiritual needs. EFSL organises a convention annually. This is a time for church leaders and workers to come together to address crucial matters affecting both the church and state. During the annual convention held from 24-29th September 1995, issues discussed included the Christian attitude to war and suffering. Church leaders and workers were encouraged by EFSL to encourage their members to contribute the meals they forgo during fasting, either in cash or in kind, to the desperately needy displaced.¹⁰⁸ Some groups in the movement, like CIA, organise weekly fellowship meetings for the displaced and refugees, at the Clay Factory Refugee Camp in Wellington. In 1995 EFSL was acclaimed as a very reliable and trustworthy NGO, in terms of relief efforts to those most seriously affected by the civil unrest in the country. EFSL was made the administrative non-governmental organisation through which the World Bank, UNICEF and other donor agencies channelled relief aid.¹⁰⁹ EFSL thus became the lead organisation involved in relief. The benefits of such co-operation are not limited to just evangelicals, but accrue to Christians and all other members of the society.

8. *Politics*

As already mentioned in chapter four, the political system in Sierra Leone is one characterised by corruption and indiscipline on a phenomenal scale. With a situation like this there needs to be a critical voice seeking to address the malaise. In this regard the evangelicals recognise that one of the major challenges of the church in the country is politics itself. They recognise the need for Christians to be involved in politics, and not shy away from it. Otherwise as pointed out to me by Yatta, a CIA pastor: 'Politics will be left solely in the hands of those who neither fear God nor respect the sanctity of human life'.¹¹⁰ The evangelicals make it a point of duty to encourage politicians who are already believers not to give up. If because of their busy schedule they are unable to attend and participate in fellowship meetings, other believers are selected to visit them, fellowship with them, and pray for them on an active basis, either in their homes or in their offices. Some of these

politicians employ Christians in their offices, who help to maintain the standard they require. The evangelicals also seek audience with the other politicians to witness to them, and to let them know that they have been placed in authority by God, and that abuse of that power will not go unpunished.¹¹¹ This situation in which religion becomes the critical voice of society is not unique to Sierra Leone: Paul Gifford notes a pertinent point about the Latin American situation that is significant for the role of the Sierra Leonean evangelical movement in politics. He notes: 'In societies where politics is carried on by corrupt clienteles, a reform of culture through religion may well be the best option the populace has'.¹¹² On studies he carried out about the Christian churches and the democratic process, Gifford also notes that some churches in Africa have played a significant role in getting politicians to become accountable. As examples, he cites the national conferences organised in francophone Africa to debate national issues, presided over by Catholic bishops. He also cites the Anglican bishops and the National Council of Churches of Kenya, who are the critics of the system. He also refers to the Zambian situation where the churches were among the most prominent local bodies involved in the 1991 transfer of power.¹¹³ Much has also been documented by other writers on the Malawian situation, where the church spearheaded by a pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops in 1992, ignited the flame of protest against the political system.¹¹⁴

In Sierra Leone the evangelical movement is the most vocal in letting politicians see the need for efficiency and accountability in good governance. The evangelical groups are not just passive spectators of the political process.¹¹⁵ For instance, during the election campaign of February 1996, evangelicals were very active acquainting members and the general public of their civil rights. The general secretary of EFSL had this to say: 'It is the constitutional right of every citizen to vote. Just as citizens are required by law to pay taxes to the state, so also are we required to take advantage of our civil privileges'.¹¹⁶ Evangelicals organised public meetings, and PACWA helped to organise and took part in a women's march. Through publications and at fellowship meetings it was repeatedly emphasised that Christians were also citizens of the country. As citizens they had the right not just to pray, but also to go out and vote on election day for candidates who are honest and trustworthy. In emphasising the importance of evangelical involvement in politics, the general secretary of EFSL made reference to 18th-century humanitarians like Granville Sharpe and William Wilberforce. He pointed out that even though they were evangelical Christians, they became involved in politics by crusading against the slave trade. He further reiterated: 'While the

reality of spirituality must not be underplayed, Christians need to understand that one of the fundamental missions of the church is to get actively involved in social transformation'.¹¹⁷

To this end they interviewed the contenders and printed an article entitled 'Analysis Of The Political Leaders, The Parties And The Prospects'. The chairman of the Interim National Electoral Commission, Dr James Jonah, as well as the Chairman of the National Commission for Democracy, were interviewed and published in *The Catalyst*.¹¹⁸ One of the main instruments used by the evangelicals in terms of their active political participation is *The Catalyst* Magazine. The vision for such a publication was born in 1990, after a print media workshop in October of that year. The manager of the Christian Literature Crusade Bookshop (CLC) had requested support from the General Secretary of EFSL, in training and encouraging Christians in the country to take up writing and publishing.¹¹⁹ The workshop was conducted by the representatives of the African Christian Press in Ghana. As a follow-up to the workshop CLC initiated the formation of a writers club, comprising participants at the seminar.

In 1991, a forerunner to *The Catalyst* was published. It was a two-page publication named 'The Voice'. This was a publication in which the top five articles from an essay competition organised by CLC were compiled and published under the title 'National Development: The Christian's Role'. *The Voice* was followed by *The Catalyst* in April 1992. *The Catalyst* derived its name from the scientific concept of the word. Just as a catalyst in a chemical reaction accelerates the rate of change, so *The Catalyst* publication is meant to achieve rapid social and spiritual change. In the maiden issue, the Editor-in-Chief wrote:

The church in Sierra Leone among many organisations, is not the least interested in the total life of the people of this country. Therefore, *The Catalyst* is launched by concerned Christians in an attempt at participating in the political, social, and spiritual reconstruction of our beloved country.¹²⁰

The Catalyst was launched as a quarterly publication. Since July 1996, with the increase in demand, *The Catalyst* is now published bi-monthly.

The producers of *The Catalyst* seek to maintain the initial ideals of the magazine, which is the active participation of Christians in the political, social and spiritual reconstruction of the nation. The magazine has become one of the most reliable organs in the country for the dissemination of news and information, both internal and external. It seeks to ignite interest in a better quality of life based on an evangelical foundation: 'To promote a value system

that leads to political and social consciousness, leading to positive life styles, built on positive norms of culture and scripture'.¹²¹ Some comments by readers highlight the importance of *The Catalyst* in the dissemination of news and information to the public: 'I read for the first time your magazine '*The Catalyst*' of July - August 1996, issue No 14, with the cover story 'The Executive, The Legislative And The Judiciary In A Democratic Sierra Leone'. It was indeed very stimulating and thought provoking'.¹²² 'We will now understand much better the workings of government in Sierra Leone'.¹²³ 'One would think that because the magazine is published by committed Christians or Bible believing Christians it should only give out a message of salvation for all through Jesus Christ. Yes it does that in various ways-through articles, poems, testimonies, and more. But in addition it also caters for those who are interested in living decently in society, being good citizens, living at peace in the family, with neighbours,Far above everything else, *The Catalyst* is a source of knowledge, and knowledge is wisdom'.¹²⁴

The Catalyst is structured around themes ranging from Church insights, Social and political outlook, Health matters, Business focus, Interviews, Testimonies, Comments by readers and Adverts. Some thought provoking articles published by *The Catalyst* include 'Abortion: Murder of the Innocent? An Act of Convenience? Legally Sanctioned Infanticide? License to Sexual Promiscuity? What is It? in *The Catalyst* July -September 1993, p. 2ff.

'The Rebel War and Divine Intervention', in April-June 1995.

'Forgiveness and Reconciliation; The Way To Lasting Peace in Sierra Leone', in July - September 1995.

'Setting Right Values and Attitudes For Nation Building', November-December 1996.

'The Rationale for Small Scale Businesses', November-December 1996.

'Focus Gender and Children Affairs', November. - December 1996.

9. *Prison ministries*

Another area that the evangelicals are affecting is the prisons. The Executive Secretary of prisons fellowship sees the need for ministration to prisoners as they are usually regarded as the social outcasts. Yet he argues, Jesus Christ did not reject the socially ostracised. Part of the social gospel involves taking care of those rejected by society. Jesus himself commends this in the words of Matthew 25: 36: 'I was in prison and you came to visit me'.¹²⁵

The idea of a prison fellowship in Sierra Leone was borne out of the concern of one ex-prisoner, Franklyn Kenny, the present Executive Secretary of prison ministries in 1984. In 1981, Kenny was arrested and imprisoned on various counts related to fraud. While at Pademba Road Prisons he was ministered to by the Rev. Leslie Wallace, of the Methodist Church.¹²⁶ Though he did not accept Christ in prison, this earlier contact with Rev. Wallace was instrumental in him becoming a Christian later on when he was released. Kenny says that: 'Even though the earlier contact did not give me much of a biblical foundation, yet it gave me love and care'.¹²⁷ On his release his search for Christian fellowship led him to CIA. He was witnessed to, he accepted Christ and became a CIA church member. He had a burning desire to be a witness to prisoners, because he had been there before, and he saw this area as lacking. He discussed this with his church elders, who deliberated on the issue. They decided to approach the prison authorities with the request for permission to start fellowship meetings with the prisoners. In 1984 CIA received the permission of the prison authorities, and Kenny and a few others started visiting on alternate Sundays. Soon after, other evangelicals, who were not members of CIA, caught the vision, and started accompanying Kenny and his team. As the ministry grew, it was decided that it was best to organise it on a national scale, involving committed Christians, irrespective of denomination. The only requirement was that participants be born-again Christians who felt led by God to work with prisoners and their families.

In 1986, Doulus ship (floating Christian Bookshop), visited Sierra Leone. Through discussions with members of the crew, those involved in the prison fellowship got to know about Prison Fellowship International.¹²⁸ Through the crew members they were able to forge links with the latter, who were willing to give them whatever backing they needed. In 1987 the Regional director of Prison Fellowship International (PFI), visited Sierra Leone to conduct a survey, and help the Sierra Leoneans establish a national fellowship. In August 1987, the National Prison ministry was established. Elections were held for the first National Executive at the UCC Hall in Freetown. There were thirty-two participants. The first executive was duly elected and a constitution and Bye-laws were subsequently drawn and approved. The preamble of the constitution reads:

Whereas God our Heavenly Father has called out of the world a saved people who constitute the Church of God and whereas God has endowed the Church with the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity and with spiritual gifts and fruits, of the same, so that she will be able to minister the word of God to the unsaved and whereas God tells the Church in His Holy word to remember those in prison as if we ourselves were suffering with them. Now therefore, be it resolved that the body

assembled in the Name of Jesus Christ and for His work do undertake to obey God's word in this regard by coming together as a National Fellowship.¹²⁹

On 20th September 1987, The National Prison Ministries was temporarily registered with the ministry of Rural Development, Social Services and Youths. Full registration was granted in February 1988, as a voluntary Christian organisation. By this time the fellowship had started ministering and establishing branches in the provinces with headquarters in Freetown.¹³⁰ In 1991, the bonds with Prison Fellowship International (PFI) were cemented when the National Prison Ministry applied for, and was granted, full rights and privileges as Prison Fellowship Sierra Leone (PFSL), under the covenants for chartership by the Board of Directors of the Prison Fellowship International.¹³¹ In this charter, PFI made the commitment to support PFSL in training workers, and in providing some financial aid for conferences, workshops and seminars. However, the overall finances of PFSL are raised locally and independently of PFI.

The aims of PFSL include: promoting spiritual growth by teaching the word of God, and endeavouring to meet the basic material needs of prisoners through the word of God and by providing for their welfare.

To promote the rehabilitation and interaction of discharged prisoners within the community, PFSL makes a very positive contribution in offering prisoners hope and overall support, thereby boosting their self esteem. Apart from having Bible studies, prayer meetings and fellowship with prisoners within the prisons, members of PFSL attend court sessions with prisoners to boost their morale. Sometimes the fellowship pays fines for the prisoners. The fellowship is extended to the families of prisoners offering them help and support to cope with the difficulties. One significant help is the reconciliation PFSL tries to bring about between families and the incarcerated. Because of the stigma a prison sentence conveys most families disown the imprisoned, or become so traumatised by the experience of rejection by the community that they need help. With the intervention of PFSL, family members come to terms with the situation, enabling forgiveness and healing to take place. Family members become reunited with their loved one in prison, and visit them on a regular basis. Prisoners without relatives in the area of their incarceration or those whose relatives are never traced are linked with members of PFSL, who visit them on a regular basis.

Each year in December, PFSL organises a Christmas party for children of prisoners, so that they do not feel neglected or rejected. A request for donations of toys, clothing and cash is made in the various evangelical groups. The items collected are distributed to the children of the prisoners during the Christmas party. To give the children the feeling of acceptance and love, the gifts are given to the children on behalf of their loved ones in prison. This annual event is known as the Angel Tree Programme.¹³²

The ministry to prisoners does not just end while they are incarcerated; the fellowship and care continues even after. The fellowship and care programme is meant to reintegrate them into society, and to ensure they do not return to a life of crime. PFSL links the released prisoners with bible believing churches. Sometimes they help find employment for them in Christian enterprises and offices; for example a condemned prisoner on death row for treason, has been released and now works for EFSL.

One other significant stride of the PFSL is the successful impact it has made on the criminal justice system. Members of PFSL work tirelessly to promote the biblical standards of justice already ingrained in the laws of Sierra Leone, but which are not being applied. For instance, very recently in 1996, PFSL succeeded in securing the release of two prisoners from Pademba Road Prisons who were still serving terms long after their expiration dates. Franklyn Kenny was able to recruit the services of a Christian lawyer free of charge. Through the lawyer, it was discovered that there had been a misinterpretation of laws governing release of prisoners. Not only have the two now been released, but the director of prisons is going through the records so that all those affected may be released without further delay.

Several released prisoners testify as to how the evangelism and care received through the PFSL have impacted their lives. There have been testimonies from those condemned to die, as well as, those serving sentences. Released prisoners testify of the new hope and motivation they have received through this ministry. I was privileged to interview a very reputable figure in the country, Ben Kanu, himself an ex-prisoner. During the APC regime under Momoh, Ben Kanu was a very popular cabinet minister, having fame and power. He was also one of the wealthiest politicians in the country. However, his world crumbled when the NPRC took over the country in April 1992. My first encounter with Ben Kanu was in May 1997, when I had the privilege of interviewing him. I found him to be quite the

opposite what I expected: he was very quiet and unassuming. He has a very remarkable testimony, which he told me after beginning the interview with a word of prayer. His prayer was for true humility for himself, and for God to be glorified in what he had to say.

The story of Ben Kanu's conversion was related to me in the interview as follows: Ben Kanu started his adult life as headmaster of a village primary school in the Northern Province. After a few years he moved on to a successful business career. He started off in a multi-national company. Later on in 1982 he resigned and started his own company. He claims that by the time he entered politics in 1986, his business was very prosperous, thereby making him very wealthy. He was made deputy minister of Trade and Industry in 1986. In 1988 he became minister of Industry and State Enterprise. He served in an acting capacity as vice president on different occasions during Momoh's tenure. By the time of the coup on 29th April 1992, he had money, power and fame.

He says the coup and his subsequent arrest and imprisonment were divine acts that made him become a Christian.¹³³ He left Freetown on an official visit to London on 4th April 1992. After London he should have gone on to the USA and was to have been there until mid-May. However, he cancelled the trip to the USA because he had a very strong urge to return home. When he got back home for some strange reason he was very tense. He says: 'I suppose it was my spirit man groaning, knowing what would befall me in a couple of days'. Four days after he returned home there was the coup, and two days later, he was arrested and imprisoned at Pademba Road Prisons.¹³⁴

In prison he reached rock bottom. He was ill and hospitalised; he had no money and no friends, he felt alone. In the prison hospital he spent several hours pondering as to what exactly was happening to him. During this time a fellow prisoner, who was now a member of the prison fellowship, witnessed to him. The text that struck in his mind was Jeremiah 33:1-3, the passage Jeremiah had received from God while in prison. Ben Kanu saw this passage as a direct message from God to him. He made his decision for Christ in June 1993. He was imprisoned for one year, then released and placed under house arrest for two years. This period of house arrest he says was a blessing in disguise. During this period he had the opportunity of reading over sixty Christian books, including Chuck Coulson's 'Prison To Praise', and 'Born Again'. He notes that 'it was a time for deep reflection and growth under God's word and anointing'. He was released from house arrest on the 10th April 1995. He now serves as a board member for Prison Fellowship Sierra Leone. He is no longer a

politician, but has returned to his business ventures. He has been a source of great financial blessing to PFSL. He gave them office premises for their headquarters free of charge, and he subscribes heavily to the ministry. He says before, when he had wealth, fame and power, he still lacked peace. Now with Jesus he is experiencing peace like never before. With God's favour resting on him, he believes everything else has been added to him, so his business is expanding. He is a member of Full Gospel Men's Fellowship. He sees his special duty as witnessing to other former politicians and ministers, telling them about the love of God who is real and alive. He has seen some of them come to Christ. He looks forward to the day when God will raise up God fearing men as politicians and ministers, thus making Sierra Leone a God fearing nation.¹³⁵

10. *Conclusion of the chapter*

As can be seen from the analysis of this chapter, it is a reasonable assumption that the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone is fulfilling the abiding sense of a need for *kabudu*. It is also reasonable to suggest that one of the main reasons for the growth of the movement is because of the widespread appeal of *kabudu* within Sierra Leonean society. Sierra Leoneans see the movement as linking them with traditional values, albeit with modifications, that are unfulfilled because of the contemporary situation in the country. The evangelical movement is providing an experience of *kabudu*, an identity and a sense of security. They offer adherents satisfactory solutions to complex and confusing situations. There is concern for the well being of the wider community, and this is reflected in the lives of the individuals. The life of the individual is very important as the well-being of the community is dependent on the well-being of the individuals who constitute it. The concern for the wider community is not just limited to the spiritual but also includes material, social and political well-being. In other words, the movement makes Christianity relevant to the whole of life, and not just the spiritual. The impact of the evangelicals in the country is felt not only in the church, but also in the life of the nation. There is social awareness and a call to political responsibility and action, issues also relevant in the traditional society.

Although evangelicals form a part of a world wide movement, they have adjusted and adapted to the Sierra Leonean context. As the evangelical movement adopts and adapts external features the movement is leaving on Christianity the marks of its own distinctive Sierra Leonean social pattern and beliefs. In this regard the movement can be seen as a

creative Christian response to a changing social pattern. The distinguishing mark is that, unlike the traditional, the evangelicals centre everything on Jesus Christ as the source of all physical and spiritual well-being within the community and society as a whole.

¹ 'Time for religion', *Vision*, 23 October 1992, p.3.

² Fyfe, C. & A.F. Walls, *Christianity in Africa*, p.4.

³ Turner, H. 'The primal religions of the world and their study', in Victor Hayes, (ed.), *Australian Essays in World Religions*, Bedford Park: Australian Association for world Religions, 1977, p.27-37. Here Turner also notes that the element of power and its distribution is one that runs through all things on earth and in the heavens.

⁴ Fyfe & Walls, (eds.), *Christianity in Africa*, p.4. See also Cox, J. article 'The significance of Primal Religions For the Study of African Christianity', University of Edinburgh 1997.

⁵ cf. Sawyerr, H. *Creative Evangelism*, London: Lutterworth, 1968, p.72-112.

⁶ Interviews with various evangelicals confirms this.

⁷ For the evangelicals in Sierra Leone, the Lordship of Jesus implies he is up above, and is not in the realm of the 'spirits and gods' as Kwame Bediako implies for the Akan. The equation of Jesus with the ancestors even superficially does not hold for them, as this term is value laden and can be subjected to abuse. Interview with Cyril Luke 20 December 1996.

See K. Bediako, *Jesus in African Culture*, Accra: Asempa, 1990, p.18-19.

⁸ 'Revisiting the Grave', *The Catalyst*, November - December 1996, p.25.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Conversation with Cyril Luke, 16 April 1997, Joshua Cummings-Wray, 4 May 1997, Matty, 5 May 1997.

¹¹ Harris, W.T. & H. Sawyerr, *Springs*, p.40, for description of *Tingoi* or *Mami Wata*.

¹² See Horton, R. 'African Conversion' *Africa* No1, Vol.1 (2) April 1977, pp. 220-235.

¹³ Fyfe, C & A.F. Walls, (eds.), *Christianity in Africa*, p. 5f.

¹⁴ Point 5 of CLESL standard of faith reads: 'We believe in the power of God to heal the sick and deliver the demon possessed/oppressed through the prayer of the faithful in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

¹⁵ Not her real name.

¹⁶ Dreams associated with white or fair individuals are usually referred to as an encounter with demonic spirits.

¹⁷ Testimony given by the lady on the 25th December 1996, during a CLESL service I had attended at the YWCA New Hall, Brookfields, Freetown.

¹⁸ See chapter 1&2 of this thesis. See also R. Finnegan, *Survey*, p.116-120, W.T. Harris & H. Sawyerr, *Springs*, p.73-82, H. Sawyerr, in Parratt (ed.), *The Practice of Presence*, p.73-78.

¹⁹ I attended the meetings at the Siaka Stevens Stadium in December 1991.

²⁰ This incident took place in August 1995. I held conversations with Matty and the foster mother in both homes. I was also given access to Jabu's recorded confessions.

²¹ Conversation with Isatu Kamara at Congo Market on 12 February 1995.

²² Informal conversation with Mary Turay at Kortright on 3 August 1995.

²³ The meeting took place at Kortright, on 22 December 1992. On 28 December a coup plot involving members of the ousted APC party was uncovered. Unconfirmed reports state of the atrocities the ousted APC members were planning which would have been worse than the rebel war at that point. All those present at the Kortright meeting made mention of Sister Aisha's statement the previous week.

²⁴ 'The Rebel War and Divine Intervention', *The Catalyst*, April - June 1995, p.3.

²⁵ Cyril Luke sermon preached 28 May 1995, at the YWCA New Hall.

²⁶ 'Sierra Leone Rehabilitation: The Christian's Role', *The Catalyst*, July - September 1995, p.2.

²⁷ Walls, A.F. *The Missionary Movement*, p.98.

²⁸ During a sermon on 20 April 1997, Cyril Luke referring to the greatness of God, said that God is not the author of sickness. God is bigger than illness, and had defeated it through Jesus. He used several examples including that of a lady with an ectopic pregnancy, who after prayers survived without any damage to her ovaries or tube.

²⁹ Since becoming a Christian, Dr Bell a leading gynaecologist, would never perform an operation without first praying with his operating team for the patient. This is done in the theatre, but before the patient goes to sleep.

³⁰ Interview with Ben Kanu on 29 April 1997. He claims to have been used by God to pray for the lady.

³¹ Conversation with Matty in her home on 5 May 1997. She has prayed for various similar cases.

³² To address this imbalance those healed are now urged to seek confirmation from medical doctors.

³³ Interview with Olu Thomas member of CLESL, at Brookfields on May 14 1995.

³⁴ I observed this during CLESL services I attended.

³⁵ Interview with Cyril Luke on 20 December 1996, Mami Dumbuya 25 April 1997.

³⁶ Seventh Annual thanksgiving service 21 April 1996.

³⁷ 'Operation Restore Confidence', *Globe*, 22 January 1993, p.4.

³⁸ Once I visited one of my former students, who has a ministry in his office. I asked the receptionist for him by name, and almost did not get to see him. He however told the receptionist that I was his former lecturer, and that is why I had asked for him by name.

³⁹ Interviews conducted with them, and from their preaching. Whenever people say 'amen' to what Cyril Luke says, he directs them to Jesus with the phrase 'put your hands together for Jesus'.

⁴⁰ Conversation held with Mohamed, bread trader at Kortright on 12 January 1995.

⁴¹ Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17.

⁴² SAJ Musa was deposed by the military junta as their deputy leader when he became a threat to stability both for the junta and the country. He was implicated in the killings of the twenty-nine people accused of treason on 28 December 1992. They were summarily executed without a proper trial, allegedly on his orders.

See 'Strasser's Monday shock', *West Africa*, 11-17 January 1993, p.14.

⁴³ This for a Muslim sheikh is an abomination.

⁴⁴ Interview with Musa Foday Marah on 4th May 1997.

⁴⁵ Interviews with Cyril Luke, 20 December 1996. This view was shared by Elizabeth Mensah, coordinator of PACWA, 17 April 1997, as well Patricia Attawia, 24 April 1997 and various others present at the time of interview with Patricia.

⁴⁶ The biblical adage, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22:6, is important in the way children are raised by evangelicals.

⁴⁷ Sawyerr, H. 'Soteriology', in Parratt, J.(ed.) *Practice of Presence*, p.117. 'An individual lives his life first, as a member of a community and next, as an individual'.

⁴⁸ 'Focus on Gender and Children Affairs', *The Catalyst* November - December 1996, p.4.

⁴⁹ Interview with Patricia Attawai, wife of CIA national superintendent on 24 April 1997.

⁵⁰ Interview with Patricia & Raymond Attawai, Joshua Cummings-Wray on 24 & 25 April 1997.

⁵¹ The convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, and it entered force on 3rd September 1981. Its purpose is to end the discrimination that denies or limits women's equality in political, economic, social, cultural, and civil fields.

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- ⁵² 'Status of Women in Sierra Leone', *The Catalyst* November- December 1996, p.6.
- ⁵³ 'Women's Health Issues', *Footsteps* No 24 Sept. 1995, UK: TEAR Fund publication.
- ⁵⁴ Leaflet on PACWA entitled 'Building women for evangelism and total development'.
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Elizabeth Mensah and Margaret Conteh, two PACWA staff members on 17 April 1997.
- ⁵⁶ Report on 'Survey of Child Begging in Freetown', published by PACWA.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with Elizabeth Mensah co-ordinator of PACWA on 17 April 1997, also printed Report of Survey conducted by them, and *The Catalyst* Nov.- Dec. 1996, p.13.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Elizabeth Mensah on 15 April 1997.
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ 'Teenage Pregnancy In Sierra Leone', *The Catalyst*, Nov.- Dec. 1996, p.12.
- ⁶¹ Thorpe, C. 'Adolescent Pregnancy: When It Is A Problem, What Is The Solution?' in *Reproductive Health Matters*, London: RHM, Num. 8, November 1996, p.115.
- ⁶² Interview and discussions with Elizabeth Mensah on several occasions between 15 April & 10 May 1997.
- ⁶³ *ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ When the funding is available PACWA hopes to establish a full counselling unit, with offices and more staff, as well as a clinic, that would provide affordable health care dealing with women issues.
- ⁶⁵ I accompanied Elizabeth Mensah and Margaret Conteh to the camp on 3rd May 1997.
- ⁶⁶ See Olayinka Koso-Thomas, *The Circumcision of Women: A Strategy for Eradication*, London: Zed, 1987, p. 61f. She is still actively involved in campaigning against the continuation of the practice.
- ⁶⁷ Ten points presented in mid August 1996.
- ⁶⁸ 'Female Circumcision', *The Catalyst* November-December 1996, p.9.
- ⁶⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁷¹ Interview with Elizabeth Mensah 17 April 1997.
- ⁷² The video contains very detailed pictures of the operation being done. The graphic details make the whole process seem even more horrific in comparison to watching the actual operation being carried out.
- ⁷³ Interview with Elizabeth Mensah 17 April 1997. I have also been a part of several informal discussions with friends on various occasions, when experiences such as pain, heavy bleeding and sexual unfulfilment were discussed.
- ⁷⁴ This incident took place in a village in Taiama District, Southern province in 1986.
- ⁷⁵ Interview with Elizabeth Mensah April - May 1997.
- ⁷⁶ Quoted by Scripture Union in their 'SU Aid for AIDS and Design For The Family' project document 2.1.
- ⁷⁷ *ibid.* 2.2.
- ⁷⁸ *ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁸⁰ Materials supplied by the SU headquarters in Freetown.
- ⁸¹ 'Sex For Pleasure and Procreation', *The Catalyst*, July -September 1993, p.5.
- ⁸² *ibid.*
- ⁸³ I was present once in an evangelical service when one fellow was brought in front of the congregation to confess fornication. He was so embarrassed he stopped attending fellowship. I tracked him down at Fourah Bay College in November 1990, where he was no longer an evangelical.
- ⁸⁴ One pastor of CIA, Joshua Cummings-Wray, prefers to hold his counselling sessions months before even the wedding preparation, so that if during the process, the individuals

realise they are not suited it is still early days to call off the marriage, thus avoiding going through it just to save face.

⁸⁵ That is the wife, children and property of a deceased husband belongs to his brothers or immediate family.

⁸⁶ The meeting was a week long housewives' retreat, held at the Youth for Christ office, at Wellington Street.

⁸⁷ For instance between September 1996-May 1997 CIA, Pademba Road branch celebrated five weddings. All five weddings were inter-ethnic marriages.

⁸⁸ I was privileged in attending the week long housewives retreat spearheaded by Patricia of CIA, comprising of wives from CIA and other evangelical groups in attendance in April 1995. During this retreat issues related to sexuality and the sex act, in-laws, circumcision were all openly discussed by the wives present.

⁸⁹ 'Sex - For Pleasure and Procreation', *The Catalyst*, July - September 1993, p.5.

⁹⁰ Once I commented to a CIA missionary, whose name I will omit for reasons of confidentiality that, some of those getting married were too young, and should be thinking of furthering their studies. He told me he was happy they were getting married rather than living in sin. This was irrespective of the social and emotional consequences.

⁹¹ Interview with Pastor Cummings-Wray 10 May 1997.

⁹² Interview with Cyril Luke on 20 December 1996, Joshua Cummings-Wray 10 May 1997, Frances Boiro on 13 May 1997 and some other members of CLESL, CIA & JLM.

⁹³ This is an indication of the evangelical movement in Sierra Leone being part of a world wide movement.

⁹⁴ CLESL has a number of young people in their leadership team who help with the various activities organised by the church.

⁹⁵ Interview with Yatta on 9 June 1995.

⁹⁶ 'Grassroots woman meets Christ', *The Catalyst*, November-December 1996, p.23.

⁹⁷ Interview with Joshua Cummings-Wray and Yatta Samura on 4 May 1997.

⁹⁸ Another indication of the cooperation existing between evangelicals.

⁹⁹ Conversation with Fatu Bangura at CIA Syke Street on 5 August 1992.

¹⁰⁰ Green Revolution was a campaign by the APC government in the late 1980s for people to go back to rural areas and utilise the land for agricultural purposes. The problem was that there was so much land lying in waste because people were flocking into the cities looking for jobs that were not available when they could farm for their own benefits and the benefit of the nation.

¹⁰¹ SLEFES was borne out of SU to evangelise among tertiary institutions.

¹⁰² SUFES Bread of Life project document, supplied by SU Pademba Road, and interview with Donald Manley on 24 December 1996 & 15 April 1997.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ 'The Church And Nation Building', *For Di People*, Saturday April 5 1997, p.2.

¹⁰⁵ Sixty-seven students were enrolled at the inception of the programme, some dropped out during the course of the programme.

¹⁰⁶ The 6334 educational system was adopted by the government in 1993, promising to make education more appropriate to the needs of the society, by recognising and utilising the different potentials of children in the society.

¹⁰⁷ 'Graduation At EFSL REAPS' *The Catalyst* November-December 1996, p.31. Mr Kamara's speech is a clear indication of the value attached to western education as opposed to the traditional system.

¹⁰⁸ 'EFSL Convention', *The Catalyst* July - September 1995, p.7.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Raymond Attawai, National superintendent of CIA, and vice-president of EFSL on 24 April 1997.

¹¹⁰ After the NPRC takeover, Captain Strasser declared a week of national prayer, fasting and repentance. One of the themes for the churches to preach on was on the national anthem of Sierra Leone. This was a reminder of the vision people had for post-independence Sierra Leone.

¹¹¹ Raymond Attawai of CIA was very actively involved with Idrissa Kamara, a former cabinet minister in the NPRC military junta. He would visit and fellowship with him, when Idrissa's pressure of work prevented him from attending fellowship meetings. Interview of Raymond Attawai on 16 March 1995.

¹¹² Gifford, P. *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, p.5-6.

¹¹³ *ibid.* p.3-5. He also makes reference to this in a recent book, P. Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, London: C. Hurst & Co. 1998, p.190.

¹¹⁴ Nzunda, M & K. Ross, *Church Law and Political Transition in Malawi 1992-94*, Gweru: Mambo, 1995 p. 5f. Ross, K. (ed.) *God, People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspectives*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996. Phiri, K. & K. Ross, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998. On a more general note Richard Joseph notes that in sub-Sahara Africa Christian leaders and groups are at the centre of most democratic transformations and upheavals. See R. Joseph, 'The Christian Churches and Democracy in Contemporary Africa', in J. Witte, (ed.), *Christianity and Democracy in Global Context*, Boulder: Co, Westview Press, 1993, p.231-234. See also J. Parratt, *reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995, p. 27f. He argues that Christianity in Africa is not just concerned with the Bible and Christian dogma, but also with politics and other related factors.

¹¹⁵ Contrary to what Gifford notes in his studies that much of Christianity's public involvement in highlighting social ills applies almost exclusively to the mainline churches, in Sierra Leone it is not the mainline churches that have challenged the politicians, but the evangelicals. See P. Gifford, 1995, p.3, & 1998, p.31.

¹¹⁶ 'The Christian In The Democratic Process' *The Catalyst* January -March 1996,p.25.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* p.26.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ The Christian Literature Crusade Bookshop (CLC) was formed in the late 1960s by the EFSL, in partnership with the CLC, London. Interview with Nelson Clemens, Manager of CLC Sierra Leone, and Ishmail Kargbo, Communications Secretary of CLC Sierra Leone, on 16 April 1997.

¹²⁰ Dr Leopold Fullah, Editor in Chief, *The Catalyst* April 1992.

¹²¹ Leaflet entitled 'The Catalyst', 1992 - 1996, Freetown: CLC Bookshop, July 1996.

¹²² Patrick Hamilton, Principal Magistrate, Kenema, *The Catalyst* Nov.- Dec. 1996, p.29.

¹²³ Kenneth Stone, Overseas Coordinator Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, England, *The Catalyst*, Nov.- Dec. 1996, p.29.

¹²⁴ Hon. Shirley Gbujama, Minister of Tourism, *The Catalyst* Nov.-Dec. 1996, p.29.

¹²⁵ Interview with Joshua Cummings-Wray and Franklyn Kenny on 25th April 1997.

¹²⁶ Rev. Wallace, a British national, had worked in Sierra Leone as a Methodist minister since the early 1960s.

¹²⁷ Interview with Kenny on 25th April 1997.

¹²⁸ 'Prison Fellowship International', was formed by Chuck Coulson while in prison for his part in the USA Watergate affair of President Nixon.

¹²⁹ Hebrews 13:3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners Amended constitution of The Prison Fellowship Sierra Leone, p.1.

¹³⁰ Leaflet on Prison Fellowship Sierra Leone.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² The Angel Tree Programme was first started in America, by an ex-lady prisoner who was appalled at the neglect her children had suffered when she was in prison. She determined to prevent this happening to as many other children as the programme could reach.

¹³³ There is a tendency among evangelicals to regard events as divine acts.

¹³⁴ Ben Kanu was arrested along with other members of the APC who did not succeed in escaping from the country after the successful coup.

¹³⁵ Interview with Ben Kanu on 29 April 1997.

CONCLUSION

1. *A brief summary*

This study has aimed at presenting a picture of what the *kabudu* concept, that is community and community relationships, in Sierra Leone ideally is. This has been done in order to test whether *kabudu* is a vital component of Sierra Leonean society. The study was carried out largely through the use of the eclectic approach. This approach allowed me to combine ideas from various methods. For instance, the work has benefited from the use of the qualitative approach in data collection and analysis.¹ As mentioned in the introduction, the multi-disciplinary approach has had the advantage of making for clarity and objectivity in analysing the significant processes, understandings and meanings individuals attach to their lives, experience and structures of society. The methods help in creating an awareness of one's own biases, values and assumptions, and the effect these are likely to have on the research.² The primary sources for the collection of data were the people themselves. This meant that the distance between me, as the researcher, and those being researched had to be minimised. This was done through participatory observations, and the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and trust.³

Before proceeding to the conclusion based on the findings and observations made in this study, a brief summary will now be given. There are six main chapters in the thesis. In the first chapter, particular attention was devoted to *kabudu*, that is community and community relationships with special reference to the village, family and religious structures. The ideal *kabudu* as described in chapter one is one characterised by other-centredness, as opposed to self-centredness. The individuals within the *kabudu* are not independent entities, but only components within its wider framework.⁴ The individuals within the community must subordinate their interests to those of the community. Rights are of little significance to the exercise of duties to the community. For instance, as in the case of farming, the Limba chief must supply members of his household to join the *kuneh*, even though he is the chief. This community view of life does not prevent the development of the individual, nor does it discourage personal initiative and self-reliance. What it does is to place the interests of the community above those of the individuals. In this way corporate solidarity, as opposed to individualism, becomes paramount.

The religious dimension is very important in helping to shape and maintain social values thereby fostering *kabudu* solidarity and well-being. This is noted in the descriptions of rituals to the ancestors. The descriptions of the rites of passage, as contained in chapter two, emphasise the fact that individuals become fully human through a gradual process of integration into the community. This gradual process of integration from birth to death usually involves the three phases of separation, transition, and incorporation.⁵ The religious dimension is also significant in the rites of passage. The rites support and make sacred the structure of authority in the community. This in turn helps to conserve order in the society. For example, the puberty initiation rites reflect a preoccupation with the sacred. Before the initiation, during each significant stage, and the final ceremony are all located in the sacred, through various sacrifices and rituals. The sacred dimension confirms to the individual the fact that the norms, values and structures in their community are to be maintained.

Chapter three deals with the influence of modernity on the traditional views of *kabudu*, as a normal and unavoidable factor. The chapter deals with the recession of the traditional religion and the rise in conversion to Christianity and Islam. However, even though the traditional religion in its original form recedes, and subscribers switch allegiance to the universal religions, it does not die out completely as it is reinvented in the new. There are modifications and extensions taking place, not only in religion but in other traditional spheres, as people migrate into the urban areas due to reasons like quality education, employment opportunities, and better health care and other amenities. As people migrate, their level of interactive influences increases, and people accept new ideals and values either in complete replacement of some old ones, or as an intermingling variant on the old.

Chapter four deals with the politics of corruption as a negation of community ideals and values. The description centres around the APC regime, who ruled Sierra Leone for twenty-four years. The regime built and maintained support through the distribution of resources on a personal basis to its followers. In this regard relatively few resources that could be accounted for were distributed. The resultant effect was the skewing of development efforts, and the undermining of mobilisation of resources for the benefit of the whole society.⁶ They created a political culture in which corruption, patronage and greed became institutionalised. In pursuit of individual goals, politicians simply suppressed group aspirations. The resultant effect is the rebel war, with all the devastating consequences for the country.

Chapters five and six deal with the evangelical Christian movement in Sierra Leone; a movement whose theology is not only loyal to the faith which it seeks to address, but in some ways is relevant to the cultural, political and social environment in which it is produced. Chapter five deals with the origins and teachings of five evangelical Christian groups in Sierra Leone, and chapter six analyses their role in the society. The relationship between the evangelical movement and tradition is noted in chapter six as representative of continuity and enrichment on the one hand, and, on the other, as conflict and variation. Like the traditional community, the evangelicals are concerned with the social life of the individuals. The benefits of their social gospel are enjoyed not only by members, but by the society as a whole. The evangelicals are also a very strong voice in seeking to address the political malaise in the country. Through their teachings and conduct they emphasise the distinguishable feature of the movement, which is Jesus Christ. They regard him as the only power that can bring about reform in individual lives, and in the whole community.

2. *The findings*

The three hypotheses to be tested in this study have been listed as:

1. *Kabudu* defines an essential part of the fabric of the Sierra Leone society.
2. *Kabudu* has undergone modifications and extensions due to the forces of modernity and the political situation in the country.
3. The evangelical Christian movement is fulfilling the prevailing need for *kabudu* in the light of changes taking place.

The conclusion is based on the findings and observations drawn using the above hypotheses.

This study substantiates the initial hypothesis that *kabudu* defines an essential part of the fabric of the Sierra Leone society. That this is the case has been demonstrated by an examination of the traditional ideal of *kabudu*, as exemplified by the village and family *kabudu* in chapter one, and the created institution of rites of passage in chapter two. An examination of the village and family structures reveals the finding that the traditional ideal of *kabudu* is indeed a fundamental outcome of traditional practices in the country. It is noted that the creation of *kabudu* as an outcome of traditional practices does not imply a static condition. The traditional ideal of *kabudu* is dynamic. As it expresses its dynamism, and as time evolves, it involves the retention of certain values and norms attributed to tradition,

while at the same time adopting and adapting newer elements into the already existing framework. This leads to retention, modification and expansion.

Observations to be drawn from the examination include the fact that the created structures and institutions are very important in ensuring that the continuity and values of the *kabudu* are maintained and enhanced. A structure like that of the family as described in chapter one, is the institution at which caring and sharing is at its deepest level. This sense of sharing and cooperation leads to the building up of oneself, as well as others. In this environment the individual identity is shaped and nurtured.⁷ There is also the created institution of rites of passage through which the continuity and values of a *kabudu* expression that is without reference to ethnicity, or social status are instilled and maintained. It is a created institution that emphasises the fact that the individuals receive their identity and acceptance as social beings, through a gradual process of integration. It establishes the individual's identity not as a separate entity, but as part of the corporate whole.⁸ On the whole, the structures and institutions created by the individuals who live and interact together, having common norms, values, aspirations and goals, result in a common bonding and a shared identity. This in turn enables the individual to be other-centred, rather than self-centred, working together with others in the interest of all.

Another observation that can be drawn from the study is the importance attached to the sacred for the shaping and fostering of *kabudu* solidarity and well-being. That this is very important can be seen from the fact that explanations and solutions to occurrences are always sought in spiritual terms. Caution must always be exercised in ensuring that the right relationship is maintained with the sacred. This explains the need for rituals to the ancestors, as well as the observance of taboos and regulations. The maintenance of the right relationship implies a union between each individual within the *kabudu* and the spiritual world. When this happens the individual poses no danger either to himself or to the well-being of the community. By the same token anti-social activities like witchcraft are given a spiritual dimension, and thought to be a destructive force that militates against human relationships, and the sanctity of the *kabudu*.⁹

It should be pointed out that the sacred dimension is not referring to the traditional religion per se, even though it includes it. It is referring to the belief system that has evolved with the traditional religion as the basic framework. The belief system is about supernatural power,

and about tapping that power for humanity. This explains why Christians and Muslims still subscribe to traditional beliefs, such as, the role of the ancestors as custodians of the social and moral order, and in their ability to influence the lives of the living both for good or ill. It also explains why the evangelical Christians also emphasise the power of Jesus, and why they have to observe rules and regulations as a means of maintaining the right relationship with Christ, as well as for preserving the well-being of the community.

The findings of this study also support the second hypothesis that *kabudu* involves a changing face, and is dynamic. Yet the changing face does not refer to that which completely obliterates everything that is traditional. There is retention at the same time as modifications and widening occurs. In exploring the hypothesis that *kabudu* has undergone inevitable changes due to modernity, it is observed that the attitudes of individuals, particularly the educated youths and migrants, reflect the view that *kabudu* remains an important fabric of society. Using the data on the five individuals mentioned in chapter three, one notes that there is a compartmentalised way of behaving: one acceptable standard when dealing with elders, and another when dealing with the broader based peer associations. Modernity has created the situation in which there is a self-conscious embracement and commitment to new values and ideals, but the old does not die out, but are reinvented in the new. There is the creation of a larger variety of new social groupings and networks that is universally more acceptable. Yet whether some aspects of traditional norms and values are being rejected and new ones adopted, or whether the existing ones are being modified and extended to suit the contemporary context, the study reveals that the overriding need for *kabudu* still remains.

The findings, based on the description of the politics of corruption, also highlight the importance individuals attach to the created structures and institutions, for the continuity and maintenance of the values and norms, that affect not only the well-being of the individuals, but the whole society. The findings reveal that corruption in Sierra Leone is institutionalised, due to the structure created by the APC.¹⁰ This structure emphasises self-centredness, greed, selfishness, nepotism, and other vices. Peoples' values and perceptions on *kabudu* are seen in their mistrust of the politicians, and their willingness to support any organisation that will restore the right standards of community well-being. This was demonstrated on several occasions, particularly in the enthusiastic support given to the NPRC regime that ousted the APC.

The examination of the evangelical movement, particularly in chapter six, substantiates the hypothesis that the rise of the evangelical Christian movement in Sierra Leone is in part due to its fulfilling the abiding sense of a need for *kabudu*. The *kabudu* face has changed from the period when the traditional religion was responsible for instituting and shaping societal norms and values, to the incorporation of missionary Christianity with more universally acceptable principles. Now the new face is reflected in the evangelical Christian movement. The data reveal that the growth of the movement confirms the value individuals attach to the traditional ideal of *kabudu*, and demonstrates their willingness to support a movement they see as meeting those needs for community. These needs include the spiritual dimension with its capacity of satisfactorily addressing complex and confusing issues. The movement, however, just like tradition, goes beyond the spiritual, and deals with economic, social and political needs. It must be noted, however, that these observations do not imply that the evangelical movement consciously affirms traditional religious beliefs and practices. The research demonstrates that the evangelical movement provides explanations and answers in spiritual dimensions, and meets other needs that tradition originally met.

The findings about the evangelicals also buttress the point made earlier that the spiritual dimension for the Sierra Leonean is all about power, and tapping that power for humanity. If the power of Jesus Christ is '*supa supa powa*', then it becomes a welcomed attraction.

From the exploration and examination of the thesis material, one is led to conclude that *kabudu* is indeed a vital fabric of Sierra Leone society. *Kabudu* has been, and continues to be, a cornerstone of Sierra Leone society. The emphasis on corporateness as against individualism, as well as the fulfilment of the deep yearning for fellowship with others, and the need to belong, are all distinguishing values of the *kabudu* identity. Even when *kabudu* goes through modifications and extensions, the basic system of understanding remains. Traditional norms and values are therefore reinvented within a newer framework, as it is now doing in the case of the evangelical Christian movement in the country.

3. Suggestions for further research

There appear to be further areas for research:

With specific reference to Sierra Leone, the above study has followed trends within the society over time; a post-political malaise and post-rebel war environment may be ideal for a

study on emerging perceptions and attitudes towards community and community relationships, with reference to the evangelical Christian movement. Will the trend away from traditional rites and practices persist under the movement, or will there be a revival of the traditional religion?

The research has not addressed questions such as: How does the evangelical Christian movement relate to community in other parts of Africa? Would socio-political concerns define the focus of evangelical Christianity in other parts of Africa? Are African theologians addressing thoroughly the issues involved in community?¹¹ These appear to be further areas for research.

¹ Creswell, J.W. *Research Design*, p.6f.

² See Cox, J.L. *Rational Ancestors*, on phenomenological method.

³ See page 13 of this thesis.

⁴ Sawyerr, H. 'Soteriology', p.117.

⁵ See chapter two of thesis for Genep's definition.

⁶ Riley, S.P. & D. Fasholé-Luke, 'Political Leadership And Economic Policy', p.104.

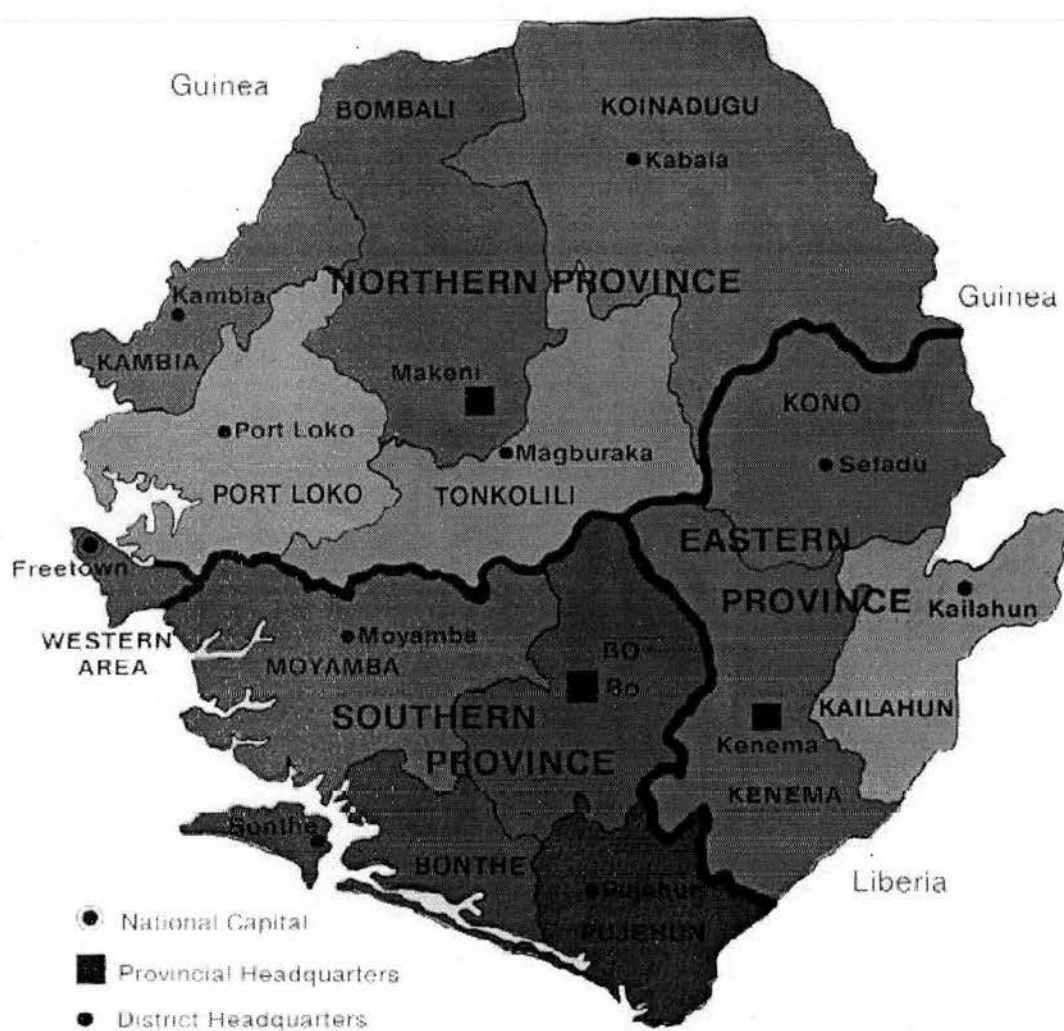
⁷ Mbiti, J. *African Religions*, p.108. 'I am because we are'.

⁸ See Eliade, *Encyclopaedia*, p.381.

⁹ Go back to chapter one of this thesis for a description of the significance of the sacred in the community.

¹⁰ Kpundeh, S.J. *Politics and Corruption*, p.93, defines institutional corruption as deep seated, and linked to the created structure, rather than just the wrong doings of a few bad individuals.

¹¹ See among others E.B. Idowu, *Towards An Indigenous Church*, London: OUP, 1965, p.22f. E.W. Fasholé-Luke, 'The quest for an African Christian Theology', *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol.27 (3), July 1975, p.267f, and 'Footpaths and Signposts to African Christian Theology', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol.34, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1981, p.396f. K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995, p.59f. J. Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995, p.27f.



Political map of Sierra Leone.

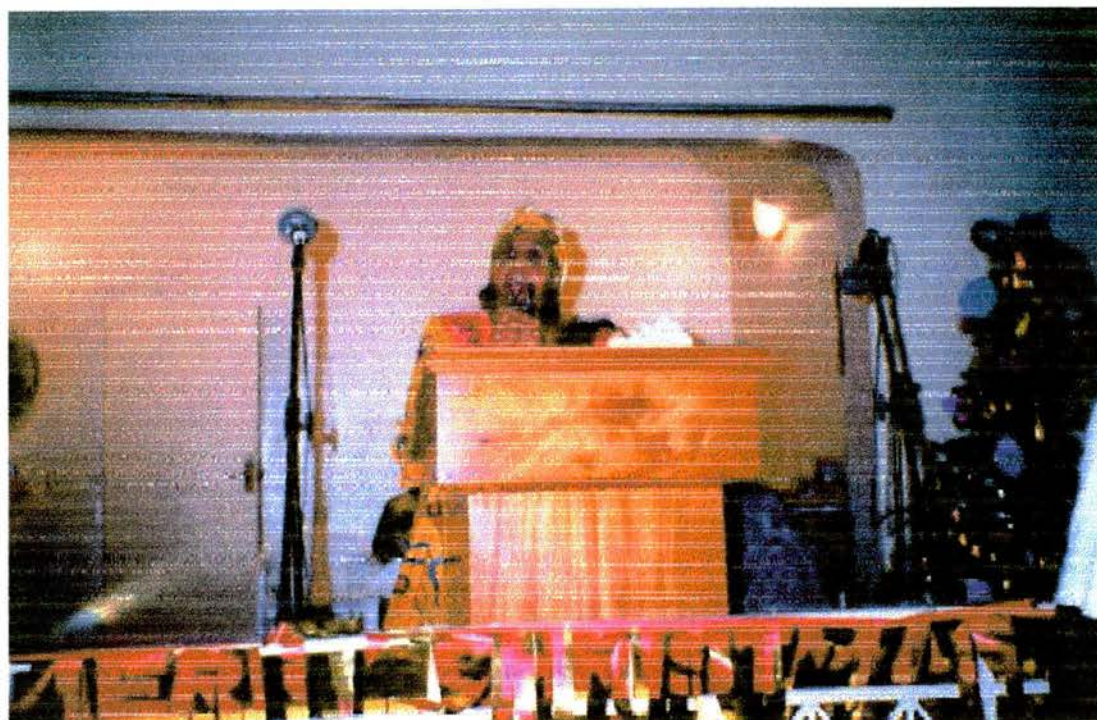
Copied from *Background to Sierra Leone* 1980, p.10



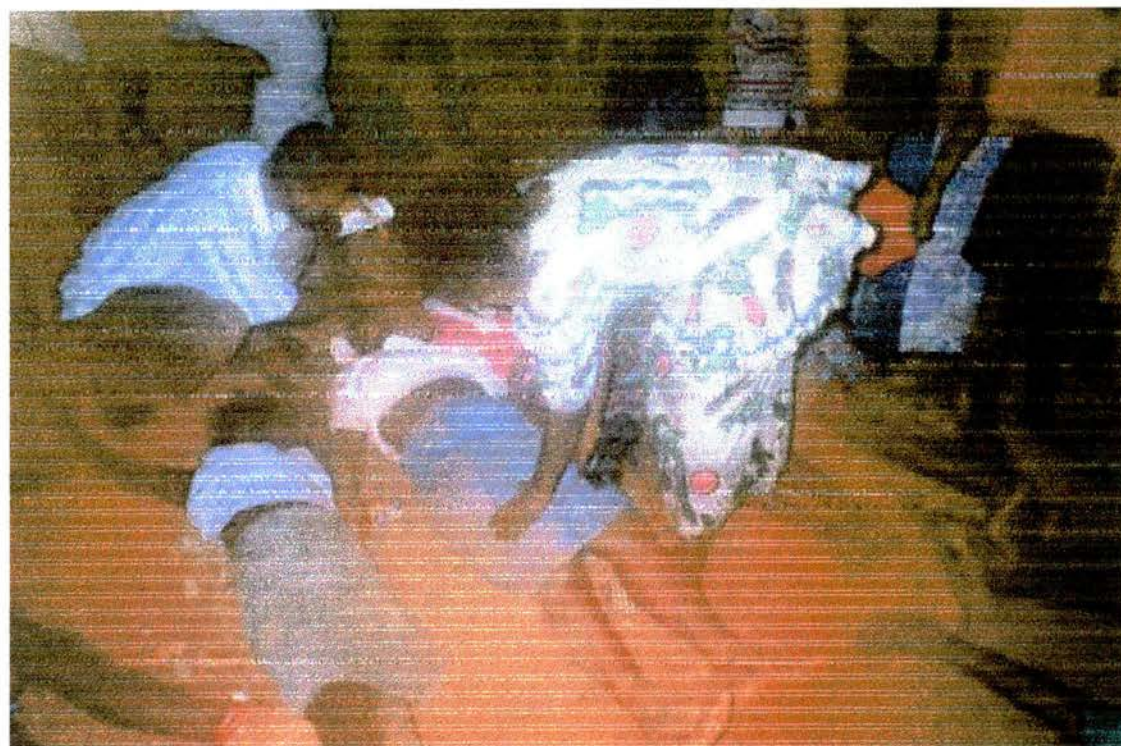
People gathered for prayer meeting at Wellington playing field on 15 January 1993, after week of National repentance fasting and prayer. (see Chapter Four 6.A)



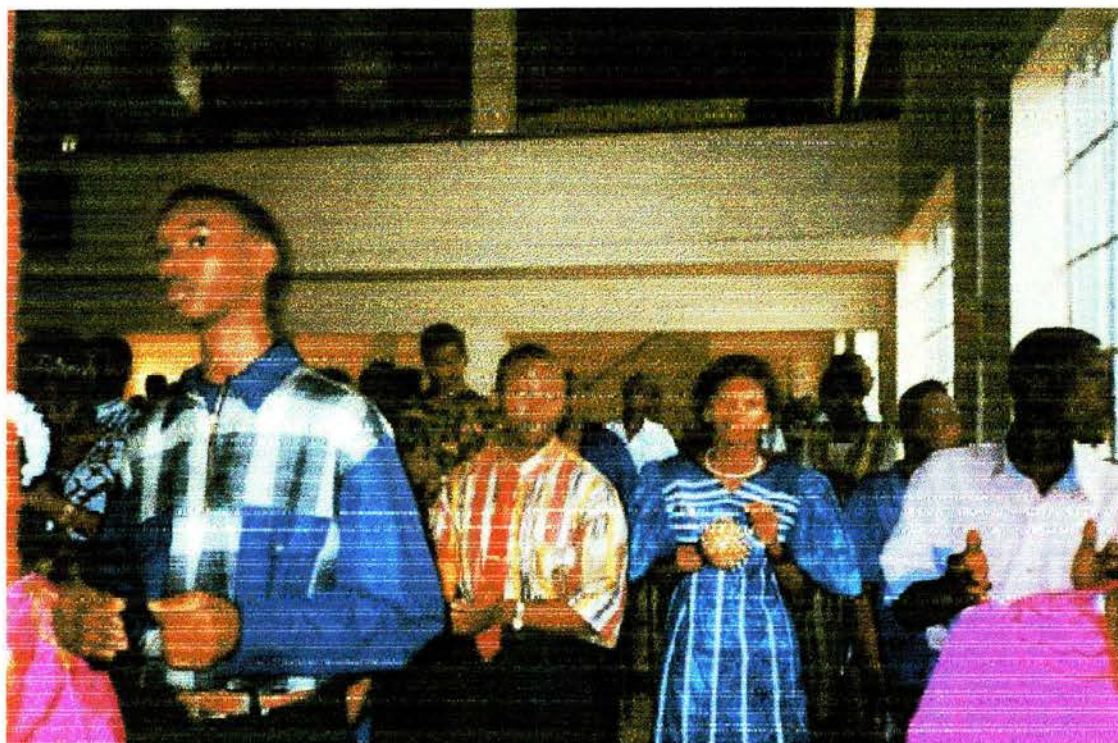
Similar gathering on 15 January 1993, in front of the Freetown Cotton tree.



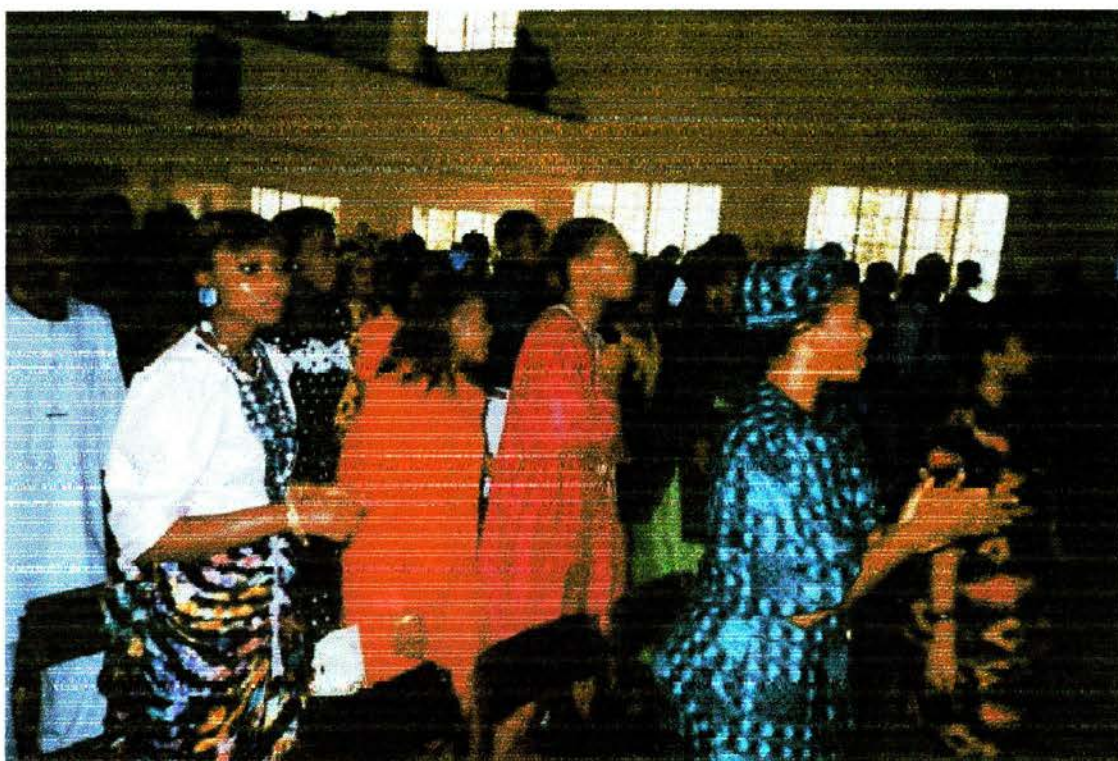
Mrs Dora Dumbuya, founder of JLM, the only evangelical group started solely by a woman. (see Chapter Five 3.F)



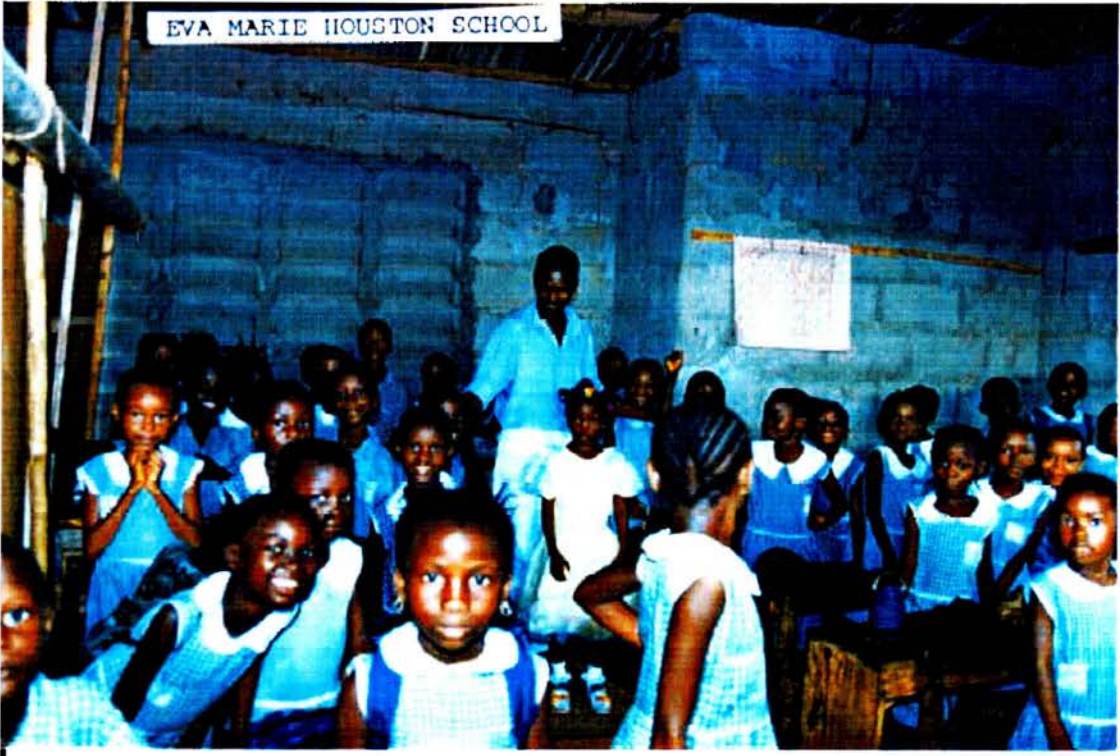
Deliverance meeting on 20 January 1995, at Kissy Village, Freetown.



CLESLservice on 20 April 1997 at YWCA new hall. (Notice the use of the *segureh* – African gourd.)



The congregation clapping, singing and dancing during the same CLESL service. (see Chap Six.1)



Some pupils of the Eva Houston School. (Chapter Six.2A)



Inter-ethnic marriage conducted by CIA on 18 December 1993.

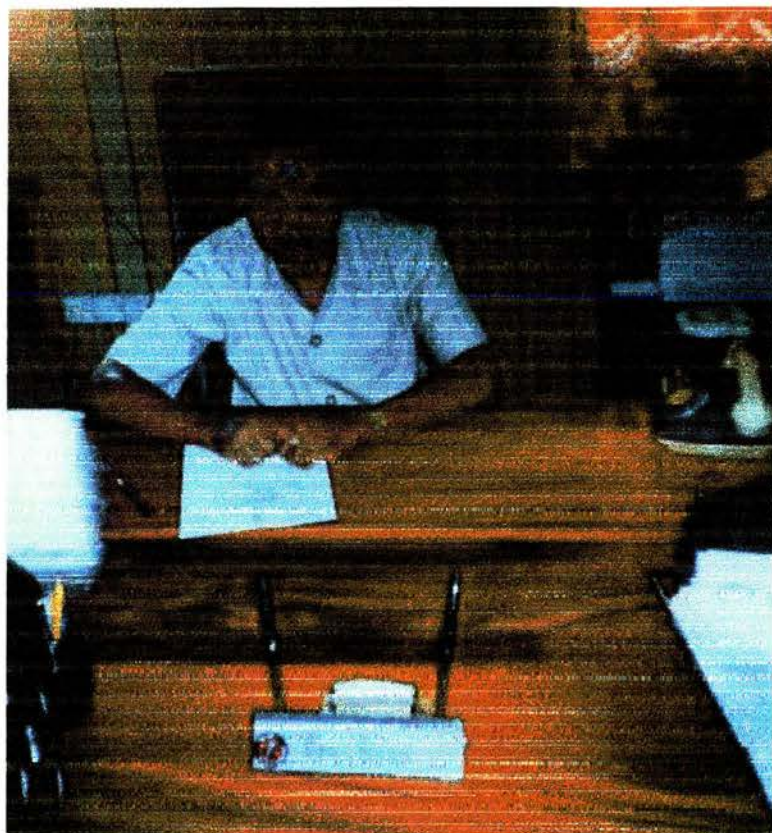
The lady is carrying husk rice- African symbol of fertility (see Chapter Six.5)



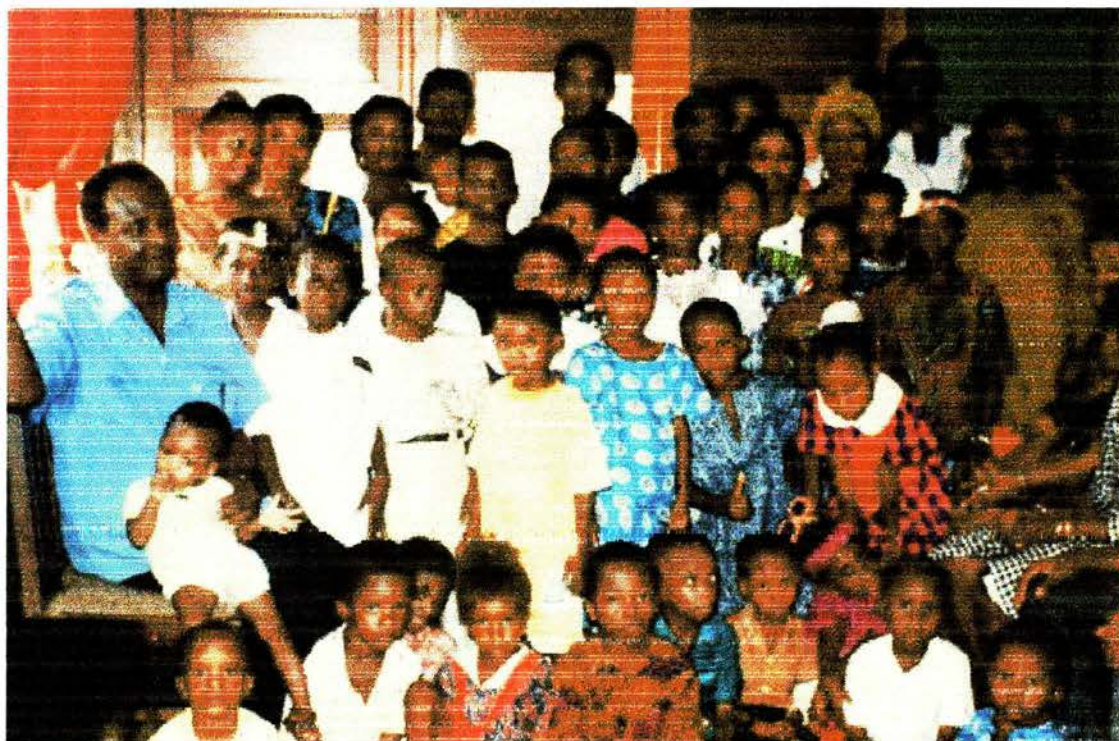
Displaced persons waiting for relief supplies in front of EFSL office on 19 February 1997. (see Chapter Six.6)



CIA camp church for displaced persons, at the Clay factory on 23 March 1997. (see Chapter Six.6)



Ben Kanu, former APC cabinet minister, and board member of PFSL. (see Chapter Six.9)



Christmas party for the children of prisoners held on 25 December 1996. (see Chapter Six.9)

Appendix
Sierra Leone's Favourite National Prayer
Governor Clarkson's Prayer For Sierra Leone

O Lord, I beseech Thee favourably to hear the prayer of him who wishes to be Thy servant, and pardon him from presuming to address Thee from this sacred place. O God, I know my own infirmity and unworthiness, and I know Thine abundant mercies to those who wish to be guided by Thy will. Support me, O Lord, with Thy heavenly grace, and so enable me to conduct myself through this earthly life, that my actions may be consistent with the words I have uttered this day. Thou knowest that I am now about to depart from this place, and to leave the people whom it has pleased Thee to entrust to my care. Guide them, O merciful God in the paths of truth and let not a few wicked men among us draw down the vengeance upon this Colony.

Ingraft into their hearts a proper sense of duty, and enable them through Thy grace to conduct themselves as Christians, that they may not come to Thy house without that pleasing emotion which every grateful man must feel when paying adoration to the Author of life. But I have great reason to fear, O Lord, that many who frequent Thy church do not approach Thy presence as becomes them, and that they may partly be compared to the Scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites.

Pardon, O God, their infirmities: and as Thou knowest their weakness from the manner in which they have formerly been treated, and the little opportunity they have had of knowing Thy will and getting acquainted with the merits of Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, look down upon them with an eye of mercy and suffer them not to incur Thy displeasure, after they have had an opportunity of being instructed in the ways of Thy commandments.

Bless, O Lord, the inhabitants of this vast Continent, and incline their hearts towards us, that they may more readily listen to our advice and doctrines, and that we may conduct ourselves towards them so as to convince them of the happiness we enjoy under Thy Almighty protection.

Banish from this Colony, O Lord, all heathenish superstition, and let the inhabitants know that Thou art the only true God in Whom we live and move and have our being. If these people who profess Thy religion will not be assured of Thy superior power, convince them O God, of Thine anger for their profession without their practice: for Thou knowest I brought them here in hopes of making them and their families happy, both in this world and to all eternity.

But I fear they may not be governed by my advice, and that they may ruin themselves and their children forever by their perverse and ignorant behaviour. I entreat Thee not to let their evil example affect the great cause in which we have embarked, but I would rather see this place in ashes and every wicked person destroyed, than that the millions we have now the opportunity of bringing to the light and knowledge of Thy holy religion should, from the wickedness of a few individuals, still continue in their accustomed darkness and barbarism.

Thou knowest that I have universally talked of their apparent virtue and goodness, and have praised Thy name for having permitted me to be the servant employed in so great and glorious a cause. If I have been deceived, I am sorry for it, and may Thy will be done; but I implore Thee to accept the sincerity of my intentions and my best endeavours to improve the talent committed to my care. Only pardon the infirmity of my nature, and I will trust to Thy mercy.

Should any person have a wicked thought in his heart, or do anything knowingly to disturb the peace and comfort of our colony, let him be rooted out, O God, from off the face of the earth, but have mercy upon him hereafter.

Were I to utter all that my heart now indicates, no time would be sufficient for my praise and thanksgiving for all the mercies Thou has vouchsafed to show me, but as Thou art acquainted with every secret of my heart, accept my thoughts for thanks. I have no words left to express my gratitude and resignation to Thy will. I entreat Thee, O God, if nothing I can say will convince these people of Thy power and goodness, make use of me, in any way Thou pleasest, to make an atonement for their guilt. This is an awful and I fear too presumptuous a request yet if it should be Thy will that I should lay down my life for the cause I have embarked in, assist me, O Lord, with Thy support that I may resign it in such a manner as to convince these unbelieving people that Thou art God indeed.

May the heart of this Colony, O Lord, imbibe the spirit of meekness, gentleness and truth; and may they henceforth live in unity and godly love, following as far as the weakness of their mortal natures will admit, that most excellent and faultless pattern which Thou hast given us in Thy son our saviour, Jesus Christ, to Whom with Thee and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen.

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